British GP 2022 special

AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

30 JUNE 2022

British Grand Prix preview

Hamilton, Russell and Norris on F1 2022 and this weekend's Silverstone showdown

Plus The future of the British GP

BRITISH GP PREVIEW

Goodwood Fan car smashes hill record

50 YEARS OF BMW M.

The **Ultimate** Driving Machine

50 JAHRE BMW M

Home heroes and the future of the British Grand Prix

British Formula 1 fans have been spoiled in recent years. Not only has Lewis Hamilton been the most successful driver of the turbo-hybrid era, but the trio of Hamilton, George Russell and Lando Norris is arguably the most talented from the United Kingdom for decades.

You probably have to go back to the 1960s, to the time of Jim Clark, Graham Hill, Jackie Stewart and John Surtees, to match or better the current crop. Those four, plus Mike Spence, made it a remarkable 1-2-3-4-5 for home drivers in the 1965 British GP!

As Alex Kalinauckas hears in our preview on page 16, the 2022 Brits are unlikely to get near that result, but there is optimism that Mercedes and McLaren should be reasonably competitive on Silverstone's sweeps.

The venue that hosted the very first world championship race has come through a difficult few years and is now looking at a bright future. Matt Kew hears from managing director Stuart Pringle about his plans for both Silverstone and the British GP on p24.

Of course, it always helps to have a close race and a tight championship when F1 arrives. We should get the former this weekend because Ferrari and Red Bull have proved very evenly matched at most venues so far in 2022 and the new ground-effects cars should allow more overtaking possibilities. But Charles Leclerc needs to start eroding Max Verstappen's points lead if we are going to have a real title fight that lasts to the final GPs in October and November.

Kevin Turner
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NEXT WEEK
7 JULY

British GP report
All the action and opinion from Silverstone, plus Formula E in Morocco

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COVER IMAGES

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PIT & PADDOCK

4 Lola saved as famous name returns
6 Gasly staying, says AlphaTauri
8 Jota to run Porsche LMDh
11 McLaren ties up with Nissan for FE
13 Opinion: Alex Kalinauckas
14 Opinion: Tom Howard
15 Guest column: Tom Gamble

BRITISH GP 2022

BRITISH GP PREVIEW

16 British GP preview: F1's star Brits
24 The future of Silverstone
26 Five other things to watch this weekend
29 British GP preview: essential info

RACE CENTRE

30 Rovanpera dominates tough Safari Rally
36 Lloyd's BTCC redemption at Croft
42 Goodwood Festival of Speed highlights
48 World of Sport: IMSA; WTCR; NASCAR Cup; ADAC GT Masters; MotoGP

CLUB AUTOSPORT

61 Dolan cars destroyed in fire
62 Eriksson joins British GT field
64 Driver hospitalised after Oulton crash
66 National reports: Snetterton; Croft; Kirkistown; Brands Hatch; Oulton Park
76 Caterham's finest hour

FINISHING STRAIGHT

78 What's on this week
80 From the archive: 1938 Italian GP
82 My favourite car: Karun Chandhok

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

12 Special deals for Autosport

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Norris: Silverstone will highlight "big differences" in 2022 F1 cars
British GP 2022 special
AUTOSPORT
British Grand Prix preview

Famed constructor Lola plots return under new ownership

LOLA

Lola is back! Or rather it's on its way back. The iconic British marque has been bought together with the windtunnel run under the name of the once-great British racing car constructor with the aim of getting it back on track perhaps as quickly as within the next two years.

The rights to the Lola name, the IP covering more than 400 designs built between 1958 and 2012, as well as the Lola Technical Centre incorporating the windtunnel and a seven-post rig, have been bought by US-based Briton Till Bechtolsheimer. His ambition is to re-establish the Lola name as a force in international motorsport.

Bechtolsheimer, who races in the GT Daytona class of the IMSA SportsCar Championship, is reviving Lola 10 years after the previous iteration of the company, Lola Cars International, went into administration in 2012. That was the company set up when the late Martin Birrane rescued the original Lola Cars after its ill-fated Formula 1 entry in 1997.

Lola built F1 cars for customers. Last podium was Aguri Suzuki in 1990 Japanese GP for Larrousse

The new owner has outlined ambitions for the first new car developed by the revived organisation to be on track in 2024. "With one of the key projects we are focused on right now, the target would be to have a car on track from 2024," said Bechtolsheimer. "I think 2025 might be a little bit more realistic, but there are certain opportunities that could see a Lola back on track even earlier."

Bechtolsheimer is not ready to be more specific on the nature of the projects Lola is working on, but admitted that "conversations in both sportscar and single-seater paddocks are ongoing".

He explained that under his stewardship Lola would follow the path set by marque founder Eric Broadley and Birrane by building cars under its own name and working with major manufacturers. "I want to bring Lola back as a capable force providing engineering solutions to customers, whether that is a customer buying a compete package that they go and run at a race track, providing a finished product to an OEM or a small piece of the puzzle to a third party," Bechtolsheimer explained. "All that is in keeping with what Lola has always done and should continue to do." He added that he is "indifferent" to whether the first Lola back on track carries the marque's badges or someone else's.

Bechtolsheimer admitted to a keen interest in taking Lola back to the Le Mans 24 Hours, in which it participated as a supplier of off-the-shelf machinery such as arguably its most famous car, the T70 in its coupe form, as well as developing cars for manufacturers

T70 is revered Lola model. This is the car of John Surtees and David Hobbs in the 1967 Brands Hatch BOAC 500

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

WHO IS LOLA'S NEW OWNER TILL BECHTOLSHEIMER?

LOLA

The new owner of Lola is a lifelong motorsport fan born in the UK to German parents who moved to Gloucestershire shortly before his birth to establish a stud farm. The family is well known in the eventing world – sister Laura is an Olympic medal winner in dressage – but Till Bechtolsheimer raced karts as a child and briefly tried the off-road Minicross discipline before focusing on his business career.

Bechtolsheimer, 40, is CEO of Arosa Capital Management, an investment company specialising in the alternative energy markets and increasingly involved in emerging transport and automotive technologies. He returned to motorsport with an Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GT in 2011 and has also raced an Allard J2 and Chevron B8.

He moved into the IMSA SportsCar Challenge in 2016 aboard a Porsche Cayman GT4 run by CJ Wilson Racing, made his debut in the full IMSA series two years later with an Acura NSX GT3 run by the same squad, and then moved across to the the GT World Challenge America with a team now known as Gradient Racing after a change of ownership. He has raced in IMSA's GT Daytona

"THE IDEA OF LOLA CONSIGNED TO THE HISTORY BOOKS WAS REALLY SAD"

class with a Gradient Acura since 2020, with a best result of third at Detroit last year.

Bechtolsheimer said he was originally motivated to buy Lola because "the idea of seeing one of the really iconic motorsport brands consigned to the history books was really sad". He believes that the changing landscape of motorsport offers new opportunities.

Lola was a giant of Indycars. Here's Bobby Rahal on way to 1987 title

HUTSON

such as Ford and Nissan. He conceded that there will be limited opportunities for Lola to have an involvement in a Le Mans Hypercar or LMDh project, but expressed a hope that the organisation could make a bid for one of the licences to build LMP2 prototypes after the next rules cycle covering 2025-29.

"I don't think it is a bad thing for Lola to get involved with a more narrow scope in one of these larger-scale projects and to focus on some of the lower-tier areas of sportscar racing to build up our capabilities, so that when chassis tenders reopen five years from now we will be in a place to make a credible bid," he explained.

The rights to the Lola name as well as the company running the windtunnel were owned by the Birrane family when the company went into administration. Both had been nominally for sale for some time, even before the death of Birrane in 2018.

Amanda Birrane, one of Birrane's daughters and chair of the family property company known as the Peer Group, said: "My family is very pleased that the Lola brand is in the ownership of a businessman and racer who will write the next chapter for this long-established British motor racing icon. My father would be delighted to see Lola back in competitive motorsport and especially back at Le Mans."

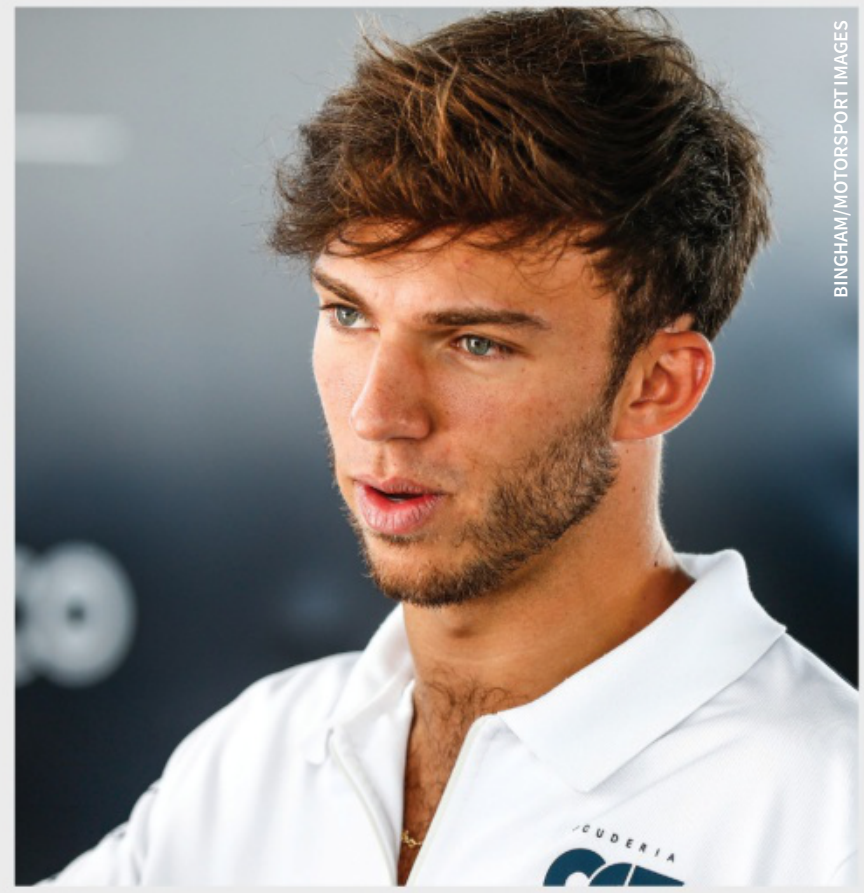
Bechtolsheimer promised that the new company, known as Lola Cars again, will remain British based and expects it to stay in the vicinity of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. It will also be a lean organisation, he added.

Michael Wilson has been recruited to head up Lola Cars: he joins from Advanced Engine Research (AER) and previously worked for Mercedes in the DTM and at its Formula 1 engine facility in the UK. Bechtolsheimer explained that one of his first tasks will be to upgrade the windtunnel at the technology centre, which has continued to trade since 2012.

GARY WATKINS

Gasly is staying with us, says AlphaTauri

FORMULA 1


BINGHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Pierre Gasly will continue to drive for AlphaTauri in Formula 1 next year after the team confirmed him as part of its 2023 line-up last week.

The Frenchman was already under contract with AlphaTauri until the end of next year, but news of Sergio Perez's two-year deal at Red Bull led to questions about Gasly's future, given his aspirations to return to the senior squad in the future. AlphaTauri team principal Franz Tost stressed at the recent Canadian Grand Prix that Gasly was "100% confirmed" to be staying in Faenza for next year, saying: "He has a valid contract."

The team subsequently moved to officially announce last week that Gasly would be staying put for 2023.

"I have been with this team for five years now and I am proud of the journey we've been through together and the progress we have made," said Gasly, who scored his only F1 win for AlphaTauri at the 2020 Italian Grand Prix.

"I'm happy to remain with AlphaTauri. This year's new regulations have created new challenges for us and being able to plan our development with the team for the next 18 months is a good working basis for the future."

Although the news came as little surprise, it did put to bed any suggestions that Gasly could drive elsewhere in 2023 as the silly season begins to step up. One of the most obvious teams that Gasly could have been linked with is McLaren amid questions over Daniel Ricciardo's future, yet the Australian also has a contract in place until the end of next year.

Gasly has endured a tricky start to 2022 blighted by bad luck, with a best finish of fifth in Azerbaijan.

His team-mate, Yuki Tsunoda, is out of contract at the end of this year, but Tost indicated in Canada that he was impressed with how the Japanese was faring in his second F1 season. "Yuki has improved a lot," he said. "He did a fantastic job, I must say."

LUKE SMITH

Vips in trouble, Edgar to make race return

FORMULA 1/2/3

Edgar is back for first time since Bahrain opener

RED BULL

Red Bull Racing suspended its Formula 1 test and reserve driver Juri Vips with immediate effect last week over the use of a racial slur.

The 21-year-old Estonian was heard using racist language during a live stream of a video game last week, prompting Red Bull to take immediate action and suspend him, pending a full investigation. "As an organisation we condemn abuse of any kind and have a zero-tolerance policy to racist language or behaviour," Red Bull said in a statement.

Vips took to Instagram to "unreservedly apologise for the offensive language used during a live gaming stream".

"This language is entirely unacceptable and does not portray the values and principles that I hold," Vips wrote. "I deeply regret my actions and this is not the example I wish to set. I will cooperate with the investigation fully."

Vips has been a member of the Red Bull junior programme since the end of 2018. He currently races in Formula 2 with Hitech, as well as undertaking regular F1 simulator work as part of his test/reserve role. Earlier this year, he made his F1 race weekend debut in FP1 at the Spanish Grand Prix, deputising for Sergio Perez as part of Red Bull's young driver allocation.

Better news regarding Red Bull juniors is that Jonny Edgar will make his Formula 3 comeback at Silverstone this weekend after sitting out two events following his diagnosis with Crohn's disease. The 2021 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award finalist will return with reigning teams' champion Trident.

"I have now improved sufficiently to make my return to racing," said Edgar. "Everyone has worked so hard to support me getting healthy again and their unwavering support will always be appreciated."

"I have no words to express how happy I am to welcome Jonny Edgar back and be able to follow him on track again," said Trident team manager Giacomo Ricci. "We are absolutely thrilled to know that he has finally overcome his health issues, winning a battle that will make him even stronger."

LUKE SMITH & MEGAN WHITE

Madrid throws its sombrero in

FORMULA 1

Spanish capital city Madrid has expressed its interest in hosting a Formula 1 race in the future, believing it could "offer a great sporting and entertainment spectacle."

The Spanish Grand Prix has been staged since 1991 at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya on the outskirts of Barcelona, and has a contract in place with the promoters until 2026. But Enrique Lopez, a cabinet minister for the Community of Madrid, sent a letter to to F1 CEO and president Stefano Domenicali last week expressing the Spanish capital's commitment to a grand prix project.

"I believe that holding in Madrid a motor racing event, which is one of the most exciting sporting phenomena of our time, would be a success for all the professionals, institutions and companies involved in the development of Formula 1," Lopez wrote.

"I would like to confirm our commitment to you and to this project, as well as our willingness to sign the appropriate agreements to promote the race and offer a great sporting and entertainment spectacle. We are ready to work with you and your team to bring Formula 1 to Madrid."

Madrid crowd used to enjoy GP at Jarama. Here race winner Patrick Depailler leads in 1979

The Spanish GP used to be held at the permanent Jarama circuit 20 miles north of Madrid, which staged the race 10 times (including the non-points 1980 event) between 1968 and 1981.

The expression of interest by Madrid comes after F1 warned the promoters of the Spanish GP to fix its "unacceptable" traffic and organisational issues after a number of problems emerged at the Barcelona race in May. More than 300,000 people made it to the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya over the race weekend, yet the track was ill-prepared to deal with such huge volumes.

F1 is enjoying a boom in interest from new markets and cities. Next year's calendar is set to add events in South Africa, Qatar and Las Vegas, reaching the limit of 24 races permitted under the Concorde Agreement.

LUKE SMITH

Aston hoping for Vettel retention

FORMULA 1

Aston Martin hopes that Sebastian Vettel will remain with the team long-term ahead of talks about extending his existing Formula 1 contract.

Four-time world champion Vettel joined Aston Martin alongside Lance Stroll ahead of the 2021 season following his departure from Ferrari, and his existing deal expires at the end of the current campaign.

The 34-year-old German previously indicated that he would look to make a call on whether to continue over the summer, placing emphasis on how the team responded to its early-season car struggles. He has scored points three times this year, with a best result of sixth in Azerbaijan.

Aston Martin team principal Mike Krack confirmed that there had been no change in stance, and that Aston Martin would like to keep him as part of its project for the long term.

"We were always clear that if he wants to continue, we would like him to stay for long, yes," Krack said. "We are talking. We have a very, very good relationship, and it is not that we have to set each other deadlines.

"Obviously at one point, if we drag that too long, we will also be running into trouble, and he's aware of that. But they are very trustworthy discussions that we are having. From that point of view, it's all good."

LUKE SMITH

PORSCHE

Jota steps up with Porsche...

WEC

Multiple Le Mans 24 Hours LMP2 class winner Jota has become the first customer team to confirm a programme with Porsche's new 963 LMDh in the World Endurance Championship next year.

The British team announced its graduation to the top class of the series with a solo Hypercar entry last Saturday evening after a run of successes in P2. They include a third class victory at Le Mans this month after wins in 2014 and, under the flag of Jackie Chan DC Racing, 2017. It has had at least one car on the class podium at the French enduro in eight of the past nine years.

The team is known to have had talks about LMDh with multiple manufacturers, but, said team boss Sam Hignett, "Porsche offered the only opportunity to be there in 2023 and we were keen to have a go in year one".

Hignett believes the team will be able to compete with the factory Porsche Penske Motorsport squad. "We are comfortable with the way the rules are written and with what Porsche is going to do that we will have the right equipment to challenge for the wins," he said. "We always said we would move up if we could put the package together to win outright."

Jota's announcement included the naming of hire car giant Hertz as title sponsor. Hignett described it as a "proper commercial deal" that will enable it to pick its drivers free of financial constraints. He said it is too early to talk about the driving squad for a car that should be delivered late this year.

JDC-Miller MotorSports beat Jota to the punch on Saturday as the first team to confirm a customer programme with the 963: it will race a solo car in the IMSA SportsCar Championship next year. The winner of the 2021 Sebring 12 Hours is moving over from Cadillac after racing a DPi-V.R Daytona Prototype international since 2019.

It is expected that Porsche will have two customers in both WEC and IMSA. Jota looks unlikely to continue in LMP2 next year, Hignett saying the team "will focus all its LMP rescource on LMDh".

GARY WATKINS

Rins washes up with LCR Honda for 2023

MOTOGP

Suzuki rider Alex Rins will join LCR next season on a two-year deal signed directly with Honda. The three-time MotoGP race winner will take the place of Alex Marquez, with the 2019 Moto2 world champion moving to Gresini Ducati.

Rins was put onto the 2023 rider market when Suzuki announced last month that it will quit MotoGP at the end of this year. He had been linked with several teams since then, including KTM (which signed Jack Miller instead), RNF Racing and Gresini.

Rins was swayed by Honda and LCR because he will have factory machinery, which he said at last weekend's Dutch Grand Prix was something he "deserved". He will likely be joined at Honda by current Suzuki team-mate Joan Mir, who is set to partner Marc Marquez at the works squad as Pol Espargaro nears a return to KTM with Tech3.

Autosport first reported Marquez Jr's LCR departure over the Dutch GP weekend. He will ride a 2022-spec bike at Gresini, and replaces Enea Bastianini, who has a Ducati deal and could join the works team. Gresini's current rookie Fabio Di Giannantonio will be retained for 2023.

LEWIS DUNCAN

GOLDANDGOOSE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

...and Lotterer in enduro return

LMDh

Three-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Andre Lotterer will make a return to sportscar racing next year in Porsche's new LMDh prototype. His move from Formula E was announced on a day when the news flowed at the latest launch of the endurance programme at the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

The German was one of six drivers announced last Friday for a car christened the 963. And Porsche stated an ambition to take the car to this year's World Endurance Championship finale in Bahrain on a non-points basis dependent on the results of the test programme with the 963, which expands into North America next month.

Lotterer will make the switch back to sportscars at the conclusion of this year's FE season to drive one of the four 963s entered across the WEC and IMSA by Porsche Penske Motorsport. Exactly how the eight drivers will line up across the two squads has yet to be decided, however.

The 40-year-old revealed that he had pushed for a sportscar return after four seasons in FE, first with Techeetah and then Porsche. His last endurance programme was with the privateer Rebellion Racing LMP1 squad in 2018-19.

"There was a big wish on my side to be back in endurance racing, but it wasn't an easy decision," Lotterer said. "FE is very interesting and very competitive, and I'm enjoying it a lot. I sat down with Porsche and looked at the options, and I think together we took a nice decision."

Porsche Motorsport boss Thomas Laudenbach explained that Lotterer is likely to have an ongoing role with the FE team after he steps down as a full-timer after three seasons. He said it would be "stupid not to use that experience".

The other five drivers announced last week are moving up from Porsche's GT roster. Kevin Estre and Michael Christensen, stalwarts of its GTE Pro WEC line-up, were named for the LMDh squad along with Laurens Vanthoor, Mathieu Jaminet and Matt Campbell.

GARY WATKINS

IN THE HEADLINES

PIASTRI'S FRENCH GP FP1

Reigning Formula 2 champion Oscar Piastri is set to make his public Formula 1 debut with Alpine in FP1 at next month's French Grand Prix, Autosport understands. Australian Piastri's two planned FP1 outings are seen as a key part of his learning process as Alpine reserve, along with extensive private running at a variety of tracks with last year's A521, conducted most recently in Qatar and at Silverstone.

WICKENS IS A WINNER

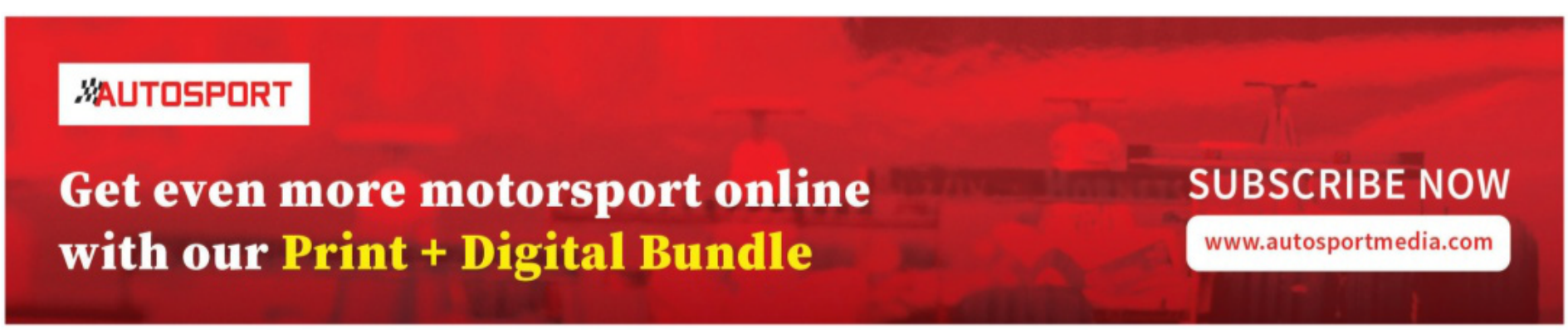
Robert Wickens has taken his first race win since the career-pausing IndyCar crash at Pocono in 2018 that left him with a devastating spinal cord injury. Wickens, who shares a Bryan Herta Autosport Hyundai Elantra N with fellow Canadian Mark Wilkins, won the TCR class of the two-hour Michelin Pilot Challenge event at Watkins Glen. Due to his injury, Wickens races with hand controls for the throttle and brake, although he retains feeling in his legs and can stand for short periods holding a frame. He drove the first stint, surging from fourth on the grid to the lead after an early pitstop under yellow for new tyres and fuel before handing over to Wilkins.

CHATIN REPLACES OGIER

Frenchman Paul-Loup Chatin will replace rally star Sebastien Ogier at the Signatech-run Richard Mille Racing squad for the remainder of the 2022 World Endurance Championship. The 30-year-old is returning to a team with which he drove in 2014-15 to share its ORECA-Gibson 07 with Charles Milesi and Lilou Wadoux.

HYMAN GOING HIGHER

Anglo-South African Raoul Hyman scored wins in all three races in the latest Formula Regional Americas round at Mid-Ohio last weekend. Hyman now has a strong lead in the points. The champion gets a Super Formula scholarship provided by series engine supplier Honda.



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Nissan, Sebastien Buemi pictured, will supply a second FE team for the first time

McLaren to use Nissan power for its Formula E Gen3 effort

FORMULA E

McLaren's incoming Formula E squad will use Nissan powertrains throughout the entirety of the Gen3 rules cycle running from next season until 2026.

The British operation had already agreed a deal to buy the Mercedes squad to join Formula E for the 2022-23 season, and its collaboration with Nissan means that the Japanese marque becomes a supplier to another team in FE for the first time.

Nissan entered Formula E for the 2018-19 season, taking over from sister marque Renault in its partnership with the French e.dams team. Nissan bought e.dams earlier this year to ensure it had full control over its engineering and race teams.

"Nissan have proven their knowledge, craft and commitment over the last four seasons in Formula E, and heading into the Gen3 era, we have full confidence that the collaboration will bring both parties much success," said McLaren team principal Zak Brown.

Saudi Arabian city project Neom will become the team's title sponsor. The country's Public Investment Fund will provide the main sponsorship to the team to advertise Neom, a planned "smart city" in the north-west corner of the country along the Gulf of Aqaba. It is expected to cost well over $500billion to build, with plans to host a Formula E round there in the future.

McLaren has extended its contract with its current IndyCar racer Felix Rosenqvist, but in the announcement effectively said that it has not yet made up its mind whether to keep the Swede at its Arrow McLaren SP IndyCar squad or place him in its Formula E line-up.

AMSP is planning to run a third car for 2023. This is currently vacant, while Alexander Rossi moves from Andretti Autosport to partner the incumbent Pato O'Ward. Rosenqvist's form in recent IndyCar rounds has improved — he has finished in the top 10 in the past four events, with fourth at the Indianapolis 500 the highlight of his year so far.

But McLaren may look to tap into the 30-year-old's (left) wealth of Formula E experience. He drove for Mahindra in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 seasons, won three times in his 25 races in the category, and placed third overall in the drivers' standings in his first season.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

BRUTON SMITH 1927-2022

OBITUARY

Serial NASCAR track owner and philanthropist Bruton Smith, a transformative figure in US motorsport and owner of 11 tracks, died last week aged 95.

After graduating from school, Smith bought a racing car for $700. He initially hoped to race himself, but instead became an entrepreneur and traded cars from his mother's front yard. He promoted his first race while still a teenager. He partnered with Curtis Turner in 1959 to build his first permanent motorsports facility, Charlotte Motor Speedway, which would come to host NASCAR's 600-mile race.

In 1994 Smith founded Speedway Motorsports Inc, which today owns and operates the tracks at Atlanta, Bristol, Charlotte, Las Vegas, New Hampshire, Sonoma, Texas Motor Speedway, Dover, Nashville, North Wilkesboro and Kentucky Speedway.

In 1982 he founded Speedway Children's Charities in memory of his son Bruton Cameron Smith, who died in infancy. It has provided over $60million to organisations in the US.

NASCAR supremo Jim France described Smith as "a giant of our sport". "Race fans are, and always will be, the lifeblood of NASCAR," he said. "Few knew this truth better than Bruton Smith. Bruton built his race tracks employing a simple philosophy: give race fans memories they will cherish for a lifetime."

NICK DEGROOT

AUTOSPORT

The race is on! Don't miss any of the action this season

British GP 2022 special
AUTOSPORT
British Grand Prix preview
Hamilton, Russell and Norris on F1 2022 and this weekend's Silverstone showdown
Plus The future of the British GP
BRITISH GP PREVIEW
Le Mans and Azerbaijan
Ferrari disaster in
Verstappen gets his Azerbaijan
as Leclerc's challenge exp
...Toyota joy at Le Mans
How Buemi, Hartley and Hirakawa made history
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What to expect from Mercedes

The squad has got used to Silverstone being a happy hunting ground in recent years. And while things haven't exactly gone to plan this season, there are upgrades due...

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

It's not just Lewis Hamilton, George Russell and Lando Norris heading to a home Formula 1 race this weekend. The British Grand Prix is a local event for seven of the championship's 10 teams — six of them are based within a short drive of the Northamptonshire track, with Aston Martin's factory just across the Dadford Road.

One of those six is Mercedes. With the German GP no longer on the F1 calendar and the team's Brackley and Brixworth bases so close, Silverstone is very much home turf for the Silver Arrows in 2022. But despite the man himself being an eight-time winner of the British GP, the event is not the Hamiltonbury Festival. Walk around the former Royal Air Force airfield, and you'll encounter a broad showing of support among the roughly 400,000 expected to pack into the site across the upcoming weekend.

Silverstone's 2022 customers, following the success of *Drive to Survive*, are understood to be generally younger and more likely to be visiting for the first time this year, with more women also attending. Max Verstappen's Red Bull team will enjoy considerable support from nearby Milton Keynes, while a Ferrari victory would likely go down just as well with the knowledgeable fans packing Silverstone's banks and grandstands as it did in Melbourne earlier this year. Plus, the 2022 title fight *really* needs one...

But the British GP crowd hasn't witnessed much victory variation in recent years. Silverstone has become a rock-solid Mercedes stronghold in terms of car performance levels since the start of the turbo hybrid era. That followed Nico Rosberg's win in the Pirelli-punctures-blighted 2013 event. But barring a stunning stroke of misfortune blighting the Red Bull and Ferrari drivers this year, or a dramatic weather intervention (and showers are currently predicted as a race day possibility), Mercedes' Silverstone success streak of eight wins in 10 races is about to end.

"We were all bouncing through the high-speed corners. The Ferrari, the Red Bull, and us"

However, this weekend remains a very important one for the team for several reasons. Firstly, after a three-race run that makes up what has become F1's traditional late-spring/early-summer street track sojourn, the championship is returning to a smooth, wide and fast setting. Mercedes now has the chance to test the breakthrough it made with its front wing and floor upgrades at Barcelona and assess its progress on understanding the issues that made Monaco and Baku in particular such a struggle.

This time a year ago, the team was heading to Silverstone in a not dissimilar situation. It trailed Red Bull's RB16B on pace but successfully introduced the final major development package of the ultra-high-downforce rules era for the W12, which closed the performance gap to Verstappen's squad and helped set up the thrilling title battle that raged to 2021's final lap. Hamilton and Verstappen colliding at Copse on the first lap of the GP last year rather did the rest in establishing that tumultuous narrative...

Mercedes has upgrades coming for the equivalent point in 2022 too. The work it is going to be doing this weekend is focused on fixing another W13 problem that its porpoising was previously obscuring. This is the fast-corner "hopping" phenomenon George Russell has spoken of since Spain in May, and it's going to be something really worth paying attention to this weekend. Because if Mercedes can solve it, the team believes it can unlock serious lap time.

It's also bringing new parts to this race because it is such a familiar venue, providing plenty of built-up set-up data and because its Brackley factory is so close. It wouldn't be a shock to find Hamilton or Russell completing additional weekend simulator sessions to evaluate the upgrades this weekend, as the seven-time world champion did ahead of F1's first sprint race at Silverstone last year.

Plus, other squads may encounter the fast-corner hopping problem too, because this is the first truly high-speed track that F1 has visited in this new ground-effect era. It's a setting where the cars are *supposed* to be at their best and fastest.

"I think it all caught us by surprise when we went to Barcelona, and we weren't porpoising down the straight," explains Russell, who wonders if the drivers suggesting the FIA doesn't need to intervene on porpoising last time out in Canada will remain silent if their cars are suddenly hopping through high-speed corners. "But then we got to the corners, the two high-speed corners — Turn 3 and Turn 9 — and were all bouncing through the corners. The Ferrari and the Red Bull, and us. If you listen to our onboard during quali or the Ferrari onboard, you hear like, 'CRUSH, CRUSH, CRUSH' through the corner itself in Turn 3 and Turn 9. Now that was at 250km/h [155mph]. Copse is 300km/h. So, it's not going to be easy to navigate. But I think there'll be a number of teams in the same boat."

Mercedes technical director Mike Elliott warns that even with the new "bits" Mercedes is going to introduce, he expects it to remain "a little bit behind those frontrunners in Ferrari and Red Bull" in "a normal race". But a return to home ground still offers the Silver Arrows another chance for a catalyst moment to galvanise around if its efforts to improve the W13's remaining issues work out.

P16 F1'S STAR BRITS

The Safari is more than just a rally

It's a source of national pride in Kenya, a sporting, cultural and economic phenomenon, and a key driver in establishing Africa's place in world motorsport

TOM HOWARD

When a motorsport event has its own anthem, it's a clear sign that this is a big deal. That was indeed the case for last weekend's Safari Rally Kenya, one of motorsport's last remaining great adventures. This anthem created for one event per year was belted out by a tuneful local choir to the masses gathered outside parliament buildings in Kenyan capital Nairobi, as the country's president Uhuru Kenyatta greeted the World Rally Championship teams.

The reason for such fanfare is that the WRC's trip to Kenya is the country's largest sporting event and is deeply rooted in the nation's culture. But the Safari isn't just that, it's currently Africa's only opportunity to showcase itself to the motorsport world.

Held annually since 1953, the rally has been a staple of the country's sporting sphere, and featured among WRC crown jewel events until 2002. It was a brutal marathon comprising more than 1000km (600 miles) of stages on rough gravel roads. Teams would test for months to ensure they could conquer it. After nearly two decades away, the WRC returned last year and, although more sanitised, the heavily revised 344km sprint format remains one of the toughest challenges in motorsport.

In Kenya, rallying is extremely popular and the Safari fills the front and back pages of the national newspapers. It is an unmissable and unavoidable event for the locals, and holidays are booked well in advance for fear of missing out. It's not only popular with Kenyans — hordes of rally fans from neighbouring Uganda and Tanzania make the pilgrimage to see their rally heroes.

> **"The WRC's return is such a big thing, not just for Kenyans, but for the continent of Africa"**

Of course, there's an elephant in the room, and not just the ones dotted across the stages. Kenya is a less economically developed country and, as you travel two hours north out of Nairobi through the stunning Great Rift Valley to Naivasha where the rally is now based, you can see the stark divide between the wealthy and the poor. It begs the question of whether the Kenyan government should be spending money on hosting an FIA-sanctioned event when it could be used elsewhere. There are also moral implications of hosting a rally among Kenya's stunning flora and fauna. These were all issues raised by drivers ahead of the event's return last year. But the thought process changes upon witnessing the impact of this rally on the nation and its people. Thousands lined the streets of Nairobi and it's easy to see what this event means to them. It's a massive party as the WRC field drives past at road speed, let alone at full chat through Kenya's savannah.

When the rally disappeared from the WRC calendar, it hurt Kenya. It continued as part of the African Rally Championship and remained popular among its fanbase, but from an economic point of view it suffered a lack of exposure that in turn affected the tourism sector. President Kenyatta revealed at the ceremonial start that last year's event injected up to six billion Kenyan shillings into the economy, equating to approximately £41million.

Rally CEO Phineas Kimathi, a former rally driver and father of Junior WRC driver McRae Kimathi, says last year's event generated four times the amount invested by the government and is expecting an increase this year now COVID-19 restrictions are decreasing globally. A deal to ensure the event remains on the calendar until 2026 has already been signed, such is its importance to the nation.

"The WRC's return is such a big thing, not just for Kenyans, but for the entire continent of Africa because everybody felt left out when a whole continent didn't have an opportunity to participate in a world championship," Kimathi told me. "The rally is not just a sport for Kenya, it is part of our heritage. For it to be reduced to a national championship event was very traumatising.

"The rally is such an economic driver, it really brings the boost we are looking for. This is not just a rally to Kenyans. The feelgood factor generated cannot be quantified in economic terms. You always want your population to be proud of their country and the only way to do that is to run events where they feel the government is doing things that will translate into happiness."

For the WRC, the Safari has again become a keystone of its calendar and one of its unique selling points in attracting a new audience, courtesy of its iconic images of cars kicking up plumes of red dust while blasting past giraffes and zebra.

But for African motorsport the platform is crucial. This year's Safari Rally hammered home that Africa is an emerging motorsport entity that has the potential to create star drivers if given the opportunity on the world stage. Perhaps the story of this year's event was 26-year-old Kenyan Maxine Wahome, who became the first woman to win a WRC3 round. The remarkable victory came in Wahome's first event in the new M-Sport Poland-built Ford Fiesta Rally3 and exactly a year after taking up rallying. A teacher by profession, Wahome headed an all-Kenyan WRC3 podium, so clearly there is potential there.

The Safari Rally's impact is far reaching. It's more than just a WRC event. Long may it continue in helping Kenya and establishing Africa on the global motorsport map.

P30 SAFARI RALLY REPORT

Forging a path to Le Mans

Our 2018 Award winner on his United Autosports campaign in the European Le Mans Series with fellow Brits Duncan Tappy and Phil Hanson, and the future

TOM GAMBLE

The start of our European Le Mans Series season was a bit difficult at Paul Ricard because we had a tyre failure. Although they're long, the problem with the races is that they are basically a four-hour sprint. As soon as you have a slight issue like that, with the field being so competitive, it pretty much put us out of the race, so we ended up salvaging seventh.

At Imola we had a slightly better race. It seems like our luck changed. To be honest, we struggled a little bit for pace all weekend, but we took a risk in the race and I guess the gamble paid off — we ended up getting second.

Prema is having a mega year this year. It's an excellent single-seater team, and it has taken to LMP2 well in the squad's first year. Prema won the two opening rounds, so we need to try and catch up at the next one.

I've got full faith that the United Autosports team can give us a car to do that at Monza this weekend, so I'm excited for it. We came second there last year. If we hadn't had a few issues, we should have won it, but I'm 100% confident we've got the pace there. United won the World Endurance race there last year as well. A lot can happen but I'm very confident they'll give us a car to do the job.

I was at Le Mans with one of my sponsors and with United, so I still got to see all the action, but it was a bit disappointing being there and watching it from the sidelines this year. It was made a bit more difficult by my driver grade getting upgraded to gold, which made finding a drive a lot more difficult compared to last year when I was a silver. It was good to watch, we spoke with a few people and hopefully I'll be on the grid next year.

Winning the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award in 2018 was actually really difficult for me. Before the Award I thought, realistically, British F3 is probably all we can afford, at the maximum. Luckily, I got put forward into the Award. Just to be in the final alone was incredible, but then we did the two days and it went pretty well. To find out I was the winner gave me a bit of an illusion that maybe we could get a few more years out of the single-seater job. Sadly, in single-seaters now it's just a money game.

Luck changed at Imola with second-place finish

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

It's a real shame because the journey ended pretty much after that. I tried for months to get a drive in Formula Renault or F3 but the step up in price was huge. We ended up getting a last-minute deal in GTs, so I didn't really get any pre-season testing. It was a tough year for me, following on from the excitement of winning the Award to the reality we had. Luckily, I've got great people behind me, and we managed to get back on track in 2020 doing LMP3, which was a really good move. We won the ELMS title,

"Prototype racing is an exciting place with everything that's going off with the Hypercar class"

and it started my relationship with United.

Becoming a BRDC SuperStar was an honour and it's helped me a lot to improve as a driver. Having access to Base Simulators as and when I want is handy, particularly when I'm going to all these new tracks in America. Having access to the BRDC Clubhouse is mega. When I've got sponsors who are funding my career, to be able to let them come to the British Grand Prix, for example, is huge for them and is a rare opportunity.

Driving the LMP3 car for the Award was one of the things that really helped me win it because I had great speed in that, I think it was a bit quicker than Alexander Sims as well! That definitely helped me. The car was run by Ligier so they put in a good word for me when I was trying to get with United.

It gave me an incentive; they're great cars to drive. The LMP2 is a step up from that, but it's basically like a single-seater in terms of aero with just a roof on. Prototype racing is an exciting place with everything that's going off with the Hypercar class.

The goal is a drive in the Hypercar class, but it's going to be difficult for me as a 20-year-old, going up against older and more experienced drivers. I have confidence in myself that I can do as good a job, if not better, than all of them, but on paper it's a lot of trust that a manufacturer needs to put into me. I'll keep trying — the goal for this year is to win the ELMS, which will hopefully put me on the map.

I'm doing a bit of IMSA in GTD with Heart of Race — that's going to be big as well next year in terms of the Hypercar and GTP. I did Daytona and Sebring and I'll be doing some more later this year. It will be good to just get my name out there and get more experience under my belt, which is what it's all about.

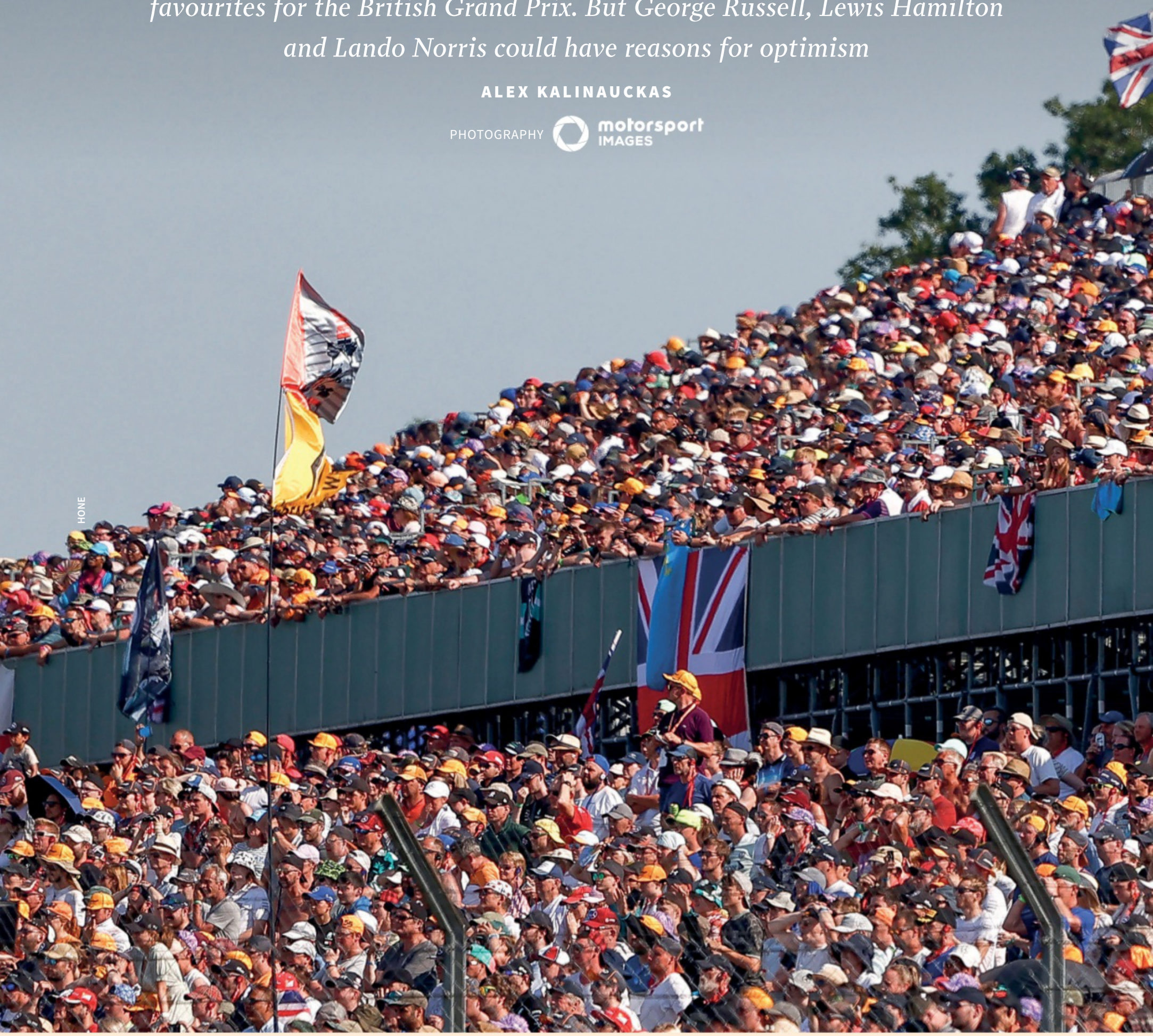
BRITISH GP PREVIEW

Keeping the home fires burning

For the first time in many years, none of the local racers starts among the favourites for the British Grand Prix. But George Russell, Lewis Hamilton and Lando Norris could have reasons for optimism

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES



FORMULA 1'S RETURN to Silverstone for the 2022 British Grand Prix this weekend will be the latest sell-out event, with the championship currently riding a huge wave of interest. That will feel familiar for those who also attended the 2021 race, which was the first fully open event since the pandemic had forced the long run of races held behind closed or only partially opened doors. This weekend will feature another festival atmosphere, while the paddock itself, a ghost town under the COVID clampdowns, will finally be bustling with activity again.

On the track, though, things are very different in 2022. The new cars have succeeded in making F1 racing closer and less predictable. Red Bull

and Max Verstappen arrive once again with a healthy points lead, but this time the title battle is against Ferrari and Charles Leclerc.

Of the home heroes, Mercedes' problematic W13 means Lewis Hamilton is travelling to Silverstone outside a title fight for the first time in nearly a decade, and points-wise he trails his new team-mate George Russell. Lando Norris continues to lead the line for McLaren, but the British team has likewise had a tough start to F1's new era. A lot has changed in a year, and here we assess how 2022 has been going so far for Russell, Hamilton and Norris, and explain what they might achieve in front of that packed home crowd. »

BRITISH GP PREVIEW

ETHERINGTON

George Russell

Age 24 | Silverstone GP starts 4 | Best Silverstone GP finish 12th | 2022 championship pos 4th (111 points)

YOU'VE ALWAYS KNOWN you can do it. It's a dream moment. The chance hasn't arrived before — not that that was your fault. A previous golden opportunity for Formula 1 success was blown — again, not that that was your fault. But here it is: the reigning world champion is bearing down with a much faster, if hobbled, car, wanting the race lead. How do you react?

For George Russell in May's Spanish Grand Prix, the answer was 'magnificently'. He defied Max Verstappen's attentions for 16 laps until the Dutchman was forced onto a different strategy, which included a sensational side-by-side scrap through Barcelona's opening three corners, exiting the last with a move that prompted Red Bull (non-ironically) to question Russell's aggression level against its famously ruthless world champion.

"I've also known Max for a long time," smiles Russell. "I know what he's capable of. And, yeah, certainly I enjoyed that one-on-one battle."

A glance at the season statistics won't record that moment. But they show that the Spanish race ended up being the second of three podiums (all third places) Russell has taken so far in his first season for Mercedes.

A Mercedes fiercely fighting a Red Bull for the lead of a grand prix. That's the dream Russell signed up for, but it was something of a mirage at Barcelona, and Verstappen's strategy change paid off, with Sergio Perez getting past the Briton too. The W13 has been badly off Red Bull's and Ferrari's leading pace so far in 2022, although Lewis Hamilton and Toto Wolff (see page 20) are confident that its porpoising issues are now being fully addressed. This is why Russell, coming across ever wiser beyond his years, says his first Mercedes campaign "has been as a team, like we are underperforming". "Every single person here is a winner," he adds. "And they've got their sights set on the top step of the podium. And, at the moment, we haven't had a chance to achieve that. So, work to do."

A good thing, then, that Russell is "here for the long haul" with the team. But while the first results of Mercedes' latest car upgrades will be seen at Silverstone this weekend, the 24-year-old can at least reflect that his start to life with the squad he signed for as a junior in 2017 has been seriously impressive. In addition to his three podiums, he leads Hamilton in the drivers' standings by two places and 34 points. He leads their qualifying battle 5-4 — against a driver with 35 more poles than any other. In Autosport's driver ratings he's currently joint-top with Verstappen.

"You always dream of standing on a podium, standing on the top step of the podium," Russell says of how he felt about finally making his first such visit in F1 (remembering his lost 2020 Sakhir GP win) with third in Australia. "But I'm here to win races and win championships. And the feeling of qualifying second with Williams at Spa last year probably outweighed the feeling of standing P3 on the podium in Australia because I did certainly inherit that result slightly with the DNF from Max. Whereas, with the Williams, that was true performance that far exceeded everybody's expectations."

But while few could have predicted it would be Mercedes that so badly got things wrong at the start of F1's new ground-effect era, there was no guarantee that Russell would start things off in silver and black so well against Hamilton. After all, only Jenson Button in 2011 and Nico Rosberg in 2016 have beaten the seven-time world champion in the same car over the course of a campaign. There are 12 races left including this weekend's GP on home soil for Russell and Hamilton, but the younger man has already made a nickname-changing impression at his new F1 home. Even so, his qualifying record proves that 'Mr Saturday' still lies beneath 'Mr Consistency' and that run of nine consecutive top-five finishes.

"I know what Max is capable of. And, yeah, certainly I enjoyed that one-on-one battle"

There have been down moments for Russell this year, mainly in qualifying. At the season opener in Bahrain he pushed too hard on his final out-lap, paid the price with a lack of traction, and so started in ninth, but recovered to run behind Hamilton's surprise first podium of 2022. And last time out in Canada, Russell's choice to try slicks in the drying Q3 session backfired, forcing another recovery drive. He has also had the main share of good fortune between the pair with virtual and real safety car activation timings too. But a driver can only play the circumstances before them. For Russell, as one of four Grand Prix Drivers' Association directors since 2021, this year has also meant representing F1 driver views on the Jeddah missile attack, the FIA's jewellery clampdown and porpoising. "There's quite a lot going on," he reflects. "But all good."

Russell heads to Silverstone knowing he can be in contention for an eyecatching result in front of his home fans. He took a Williams to Q3 last year, raising one of the loudest cheers of the weekend, but had "an incredibly sensitive car that I didn't have the faith to attack with because I felt like I'd crash if I went any harder". The W13 may have major pace problems, but Russell, in a side-by-side battle, now feels "like I can hold my own and throw it down the inside or throw it on the outside".

How loud the cheers will be this Sunday if he can replicate his Verstappen-defying form once again... »

ETHERINGTON

Pace may not be abundant, but Russell feels he can hold his own in combat in the W13

Lewis Hamilton

Age 37 | Silverstone GP starts 16 | Silverstone GP wins 8 | 2022 championship pos 6th (77 points)

"SILVERSTONE — IT'S SUCH an important race for Mercedes and for me and so I really hope that… I just want to be in a battle with these guys."

Lewis Hamilton did not expect to share a podium with Max Verstappen and Carlos Sainz at the 2022 Canadian Grand Prix, even though it's an event he has won seven times. That rather neatly sums up how differently things stand for the seven-time champion heading into his 17th home grand prix (including 2020's 70th Anniversary GP). Not since the few fallow years of his McLaren stint has Hamilton not been a contender for the win at Silverstone.

The reason why has been much discussed: the first Mercedes of the new ground-effect era is performing well below expectations due to its severe porpoising problems, the full extent of which only became clear at the final pre-season test in Bahrain. Toto Wolff himself has called the W13 a "shitbox", in trying to assuage Hamilton's discomfort after the Azerbaijan GP earlier this month on the bumpy Baku track.

Hamilton has scored two third-place finishes so far this campaign, both of which came in events where Red Bull (and in the latter case Ferrari too) suffered or were recovering from reliability problems. To this point in the season, if all four Red Bull and Ferrari drivers finish a race, the podium places are generally locked out of Mercedes' reach.

But there is hope in the air. Wolff said after the Montreal event just gone, where his team's in-race pace was strong, that Mercedes has "solved" its end-of-straight porpoising. But that's only one of the issues. Closely related is what the team describes as 'hopping' in fast corners — essentially, the car striking the ground as the downforce is packed on at high speed and top loads, unsettling its progress. And then, with the fix to reduce porpoising meaning the car is running stiffer and lower than before, any surface bumps are keenly felt. "So, I don't know how it's going to be through Copse and all those places," Hamilton says.

"The high-speed corners at Silverstone are always the most fun to drive"

"Silverstone is still one of the best circuits, if not the best, in the sense of having all the medium and high-speed corners — and the high-speed corners are always the most fun to drive. With these cars that we have today, if you look at Barcelona, we had bouncing in the high-speed corners, so it might not be spectacular [for Mercedes, pace-wise]. But I'm hoping by then we may have fixed it."

Hamilton's 2022 results so far compared to 2021 are stark: 12 months ago, he was arriving at Silverstone on the back of three wins and two poles. But he did face a 32-point gap to Verstappen. That closed to eight after their infamous Copse clash in the GP, having grown to 33 (the biggest difference between the two fierce title rivals all year) after the Dutchman's narrow win in F1's first sprint race. But the toxic fallout from those events slightly obscured a very significant moment of the campaign: that Mercedes' upgrades to its floor and bargeboards closed the pace gap to Red Bull, and never again in 2021 would one team win as many races in succession as Red Bull had done before Silverstone.

And that's important to remember, because Mercedes is planning to introduce its latest round of updates this coming weekend. "We will be trying to push the car forward," technical director Mike Elliott said after Montreal. "Trying to get some pace from the car we've got, or from the package we've got, as well as the new bits we are going to add to it."

Mercedes is downplaying expectations for these upgrades, as you'd expect from such a well drilled squad, and there is also an important warning for it to consider: that the new parts will need to be fitted and evaluated during practice sessions. This risks compromising Mercedes' Silverstone weekend overall if they don't work as expected or require long set-up work to get the car balance where the drivers want it, in what can be a confidence-sapping process behind the wheel.

This has been a major theme of Hamilton's season so far, and one that perhaps flatters Russell's current position ahead of his illustrious team-mate in the championship standings and podium count. Hamilton is the vastly more experienced driver, well in sync with his engineers, and Mercedes has leaned on him to conduct the majority of the set-up "experiments" he joked after the Canada race Russell could be tasked with assessing for the rest of the season. After all, Hamilton says that when Mercedes' ideas have backfired, it "really does hinder you through the weekend". For the rest of the year, he says, "I think we'll be a little bit more cautious on doing too many experiments", no doubt without compromising the need to fully test Mercedes' coming upgrades.

But 2021 was just the latest example of Mercedes fixing a problem it had not expected or not thought would be so severe (as was the case with the floor rule changes last year). Therefore, the work completed at Hamilton's and Russell's home race could have a major impact on the rest of their first season as team-mates.

Whatever happens, Hamilton — judging what he has felt and seen of racing in the ground-effect cars so far this year — is hopeful that they will at least produce good entertainment for the crowd, even if Mercedes is fighting in the pack and not leading it. "For all of us it's going to be amazing," he concludes. "We also can follow a little bit closer this year. So hopefully the race will be better." »

Hamilton voices caution about effects of "too many" set-up experiments

SUTTON

BRITISH GP PREVIEW

ETHERINGTON

SUTTON

Lando Norris

Age 22 | Silverstone GP starts 4 | Best Silverstone GP finish 4th | 2022 championship pos 7th (50 points)

HE'S LIKEABLE, ENGAGING, willing to do whatever it is that James Corden calls 'comedy', and unpretentious enough to haul around a motorhome sofa to facilitate an interview. But Formula 1 has already learned something new about Lando Norris in the opening third of the 2022 season: the McLaren ace is extremely tough.

All elite sports stars have an inherent resilience. But it's rather rare for the public to witness a seriously impressive sporting display from someone battling a debilitating illness. This was Norris's 2022 Spanish Grand Prix weekend challenge — to complete the event, where temperatures reached 37C, while suffering from tonsillitis.

"I was in a bad way. But what helps is just being in the car. It's my comfortable place"

"I would say quite confidently, Barcelona was the toughest race of my life," reflects Norris. "I just didn't eat for three days. I couldn't drink for three days. I struggled so much. Maybe it sounds easy and whatever, and people say I'm overexaggerating, but I was in a very bad way at that point, especially Sunday night. The morning of Sunday, I didn't want to race. But I think what always helps is a bit of adrenalin and just being in the car. It's just my comfortable place — it's what I love. But I knew how tough it was gonna be."

McLaren was aware how much its young charge was suffering, and it was agreed that he would only take the race as far as he felt comfortable. Race engineer Will Joseph would get no radio replies to his questions on race pace, strategy and potential car balance changes, so difficult was it for Norris to speak. Instead, he relied on giving steering wheel 'OK' button clicks as answers, or an absence of such a response to indicate a negative reaction.

Norris, having initially feared that he wouldn't be able to brake sufficiently forcefully to apply the required 100 bar of pressure for Barcelona's first corner, first "just felt slow with everything — I didn't feel like I could drive fast". But after making it through the first-lap target he'd set, a lack of searing pace provided a welcome benefit in terms of tyre management in the sweltering heat. He ended up rising from his 11th-place grid spot to finish eighth, extra-impressive considering he'd had to miss several engineering meetings across the weekend.

"I didn't want to race, but at the same time, I knew like, 'I just have to go out,'" he explains. "I didn't want to go and just not try. I just couldn't. I couldn't ever be satisfied with myself for doing that. So, at least jumping in and giving it a go, and with the outcome of it all, things turned out to be good."

The rest of Norris's 2022 campaign so far has otherwise felt rather familiar. He continues to lead and outshine a known brilliant quantity in Daniel Ricciardo, the Australian's struggles with corner-entry confidence from 2021 travelling on into the new ground-effect era. Norris has also shown he remains capable of grabbing a glittering result, should the leading teams or drivers stumble, as he did with third place in the Emilia Romagna GP. "That's probably my most proud weekend of just how well I drove I think," he says when considering his season so far.

But this campaign *is* one substantially different for McLaren, and therefore Norris too, as they head to their shared home race once again. At this point in 2021, Norris had scored triple the number of podiums he's taken so far this year, and later on he would go on to seal the best result of his career so far behind Ricciardo at the memorable Monza round. But whereas those scores represented the results of McLaren's recent rebuilding efforts in the aftermath of the failed Honda era, in 2022 the team's progress has plateaued.

The MCL36 was hampered by an early brake problem that wasn't fully fixed until McLaren's big raft of updates was introduced for the Barcelona weekend, with the team also struggling to get the right drag level balance of "producing that good downforce, but also when you want to be very quick in the straights", says Norris. This held it back at races such as Miami and Baku, while the Bahrain season opener ended with a shock 14th and 15th after the team had lost Ricciardo for the second pre-season test to COVID. There, its brake issue had reared its head and its momentum from the 2019-21 seasons and a promising first test outing in Spain had stalled.

On the driving side, a minor misjudgement (to be forgiven given his condition at the time!) meant Norris lost a Q3 berth to a track-limits infringement in Spain. And he struggled to make an impact in the Montreal DRS trains, which means he arrives at Silverstone on the back of his joint-worst (with Bahrain) result of the campaign so far.

At least the upcoming layout "always puts a smile on your face", says Norris, in addition to the fervent home support being "way cool". Plus, the British race will be what the drivers consider to be the first test of what these new F1 cars can do in properly high-speed, high-downforce-required corners. Silverstone's famous challenging turns should therefore help McLaren's package, but Norris remains wary of its straights exposing the car's current lack of drag/downforce balance.

"I don't think we've ever been bad there," he concludes. "It's certainly been tricky in the past, but it's never been a bad weekend for us. So, I'm sure we can still aim to get into Q3 and score some good points."

MAUGER

Season so far has been challenging, but Norris, as ever, is driving well

BRITISH GP PREVIEW

The bright future of the British GP

Not so long ago things looked bleak at Silverstone, but circumstances have turned around quickly and there are exciting plans on the way

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

FIVE SHORT YEARS ago, Silverstone bosses were poised to activate a break clause with Formula 1 because Bernie Ecclestone's escalator fees meant hosting a race was decreasingly financially viable. Back then, Monaco seemed unimpeachable. How times change.

Now the UK's flagship motorsport venue enjoys a "really strong" and "much more collaborative" relationship with Liberty Media, according to managing director Stuart Pringle. Just as Albert Park in Australia has recently confirmed a deal, Silverstone is "prepared to join hands and walk down the aisle" by signing a long-term contract extension. Most vital of all, it has kept pace with the changing landscape of F1 in this Netflix boom period to set an example for its at-risk historic counterparts.

Pringle has an appetite for more. His vision is not for Silverstone to match the criteria for a successful F1 race, but to set it, even if that means taking on the new extremes of Miami and Las Vegas. "There will never be such a thing as a regular British Grand Prix," he says. "I'm restless and I'm in a hurry. I know where we need to go and what we need to do to get there. The day we take our foot off the throttle and become complacent... it'll be the start of the end of the British Grand Prix."

Silverstone, which hosted the British and 70th Anniversary GPs during the COVID-battered 2020 season, is an ally to Liberty Media. It can be a further force for good and futureproof itself by targeting "F1's really significant concern, which is about sustainability". In the fields of rural Northamptonshire, the circuit truly strives to be 'green'. "We are going to be, if not the most sustainable round that Formula 1 goes to, we will be in the top two or three," asserts Pringle.

Seven of the 10 teams being based within an hour's drive of the track helps, as does having FOM's offices in Biggin Hill. There is already a 238-bus-strong park-and-ride scheme in place for fans and (strikes depending) trains rented to boost the use of public transport. Those attending this weekend will then be able to sample more sustainable food options and eat with compostable cutlery before disposing of any waste at more recycling points. They're the micro-level steps.

On a macro scale, the British Racing Drivers' Club – which owns

"There are numerous examples of why Formula 1 innovation is great for this country"

Of course the race is the main draw, but the aim is now to echo the level of entertainment of a summer festival

TEE

JEP

142,000 tickets for this weekend's British GP sold out in record time

Silverstone boss Pringle is a man with a mission

SUTTON

Silverstone and doesn't make a profit to put money back into the circuit — will up its total investment to £2.8million to fund an eventual 2700 solar panels. This will ensure that, from 2023, the Wing will be a zero-carbon building. It will also mean 25-30% of the track's annual energy needs are produced on site. The rest will be bought from sustainable sources.

These efforts, Pringle hopes, will help dispel a motorsport myth: "There are numerous examples of why F1 innovation is great for this country. But some people don't understand that. They just think we're creating CO_2 for fun. I'm determined to address that."

The futureproofing doesn't stop there. The post-lockdown appetite for live events plus F1's overall popularity meant the 142,000 tickets for the 2022 British GP sold out quicker than ever before. But as an extension of the boss's attitude, Silverstone isn't resting on its laurels when it comes to keeping fans happy. One area organisers are keen to exploit is the 'festival' atmosphere. So far, that has largely been in a sporting context. But expect more chartbusting music acts to perform in the coming years.

Pringle continues: "To make sure we keep pace, it is to recognise that in Miami and with Las Vegas coming online there is an expectation of a level of entertainment that has not previously been seen at Silverstone. The challenge I set our team here is how do we do that in our own distinct style without being becoming some homogenised American-based product? The answer is we make it more of a British summer festival."

The completion of a trackside hotel plus forthcoming luxury accommodation will accompany the Silverstone Interactive Museum (nee Silverstone Experience) as the whole venue seeks to become an outright destination. Further, thanks to a strong relationship with Westminster, even if the track isn't state-backed as is the case with many new F1 races, there is an understanding that Silverstone doesn't just revolve around one weekend in July. It can be a so-called 'hub' at the heart of a thriving engineering sector. Alongside stimulating STEM subjects, an £8million pot to build an international karting facility should encourage a healthy home bloodline beyond Messrs Hamilton, Russell and Norris.

It's these steps and F1's new ownership that have removed the angst around Silverstone compared to where it was half a decade ago. This isn't a quaint event on the outskirts of Towcester. There is a strategy to make the British GP a true standard-bearer for motorsport. And to get it there, soundbites Pringle, "we are straining every sinew to move this business forward".

BRITISH GP PREVIEW

Four other things to watch out for

This weekend won't just be about the grand prix. Here's what to look out for in the support categories

MEGAN WHITE AND STEPHEN LICKORISH

Can Pourchaire turn the tables on Drugovich in F2?

Felipe Drugovich appears to be unstoppable in F2 this season. The Brazilian took his first win at round two in Jeddah and has racked up three more over the opening six rounds, giving him an advantage of almost 50 points over pre-season favourite Theo Pourchaire. Drugovich, run by MP Motorsport, has failed to score just once in the 12 races so far, and Pourchaire will need a big turnaround from a disappointing weekend last time out in Baku to remount his title challenge. But with eight rounds still remaining, it's not over yet for the Frenchman, who races for ART Grand Prix.

Behind the leading pair, Prema's Red Bull Junior Jehan Daruvala is best of the rest, while Logan Sargeant is fourth with Carlin and there is a slew of other drivers close behind. Among them is Daruvala's team-mate Dennis Hauger, who took his first series win in Baku and will be hoping to continue his improvement in form. The Brits, Jake Hughes (Van Amersfoort Racing) and Olli Caldwell (Campos Racing), sit in 16th and 22nd respectively, with Alpine Academy member Caldwell yet to score a point.

Drugovich (#11) locks horns with Daruvala last time out in Baku

SUTTON motorsport IMAGES

Championship leader Martins has only a six-point advantage but is on a roll

BINGHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Edgar's return restores British trio of FIA F3 challengers

Ollie Bearman leads the home charge in FIA F3, with the British representation now back up to three. The Prema-run Ferrari Driver Academy protege sits seventh in the standings, and took his maiden podium – a second place – in the reversed-grid race at the opening round in Bahrain. He admits his season has been "up and down" so far, but he says he has been feeling more comfortable since the in-season test at Barcelona.

Carlin's reigning GB3 champion Zak O'Sullivan recently named Silverstone as his favourite circuit, and will be keen to get his first podium of the season on the board. He is 15th in the standings, with a best finish of sixth – in the Bahrain sprint race and the feature race at Imola.

It's great news that Jonny Edgar will make his return in front of his home crowd after he was forced to withdraw following the first round due to Crohn's disease. The Red Bull Junior has made a strong recovery, and will therefore retake the #1 Trident seat to continue his campaign.

Championship leader Victor Martins will be hoping to extend his edge over Roman Stanek, with just six points splitting them. Alpine F1 junior Martins scored the full 26 points in the feature race last time out at Barcelona, so the ART Grand Prix-run Frenchman arrives at Silverstone on fine form, while Trident's Czech charger Stanek will look to repeat the win he took at Imola.

BINGHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Pulling, Chadwick and Powell make up half of W Series' British complement

Double champ Chadwick aims to bag first W Series home win

With five consecutive wins under her belt dating back to late 2021, and a points tally almost double that of second-placed Abbi Pulling, Jamie Chadwick heads to Silverstone with her best chance yet of taking a home win. The double champion has been head and shoulders above the rest of the grid so far this year, and looks on course to seal a third title.

Chadwick held off a challenge from Emma Kimilainen to take the opening race of the season in Miami, before cruising from lights to flag to do the double in the Florida round. Barcelona provided another dominant victory from pole.

After losing out to compatriot Alice Powell in both of the series' previous British rounds – at Brands Hatch in 2019 and Silverstone last year – Chadwick is aiming for her first victory at home.

But both Pulling and Powell, who sits third in the standings, will be angling for the top spot at their home race, while compatriots Abbie Eaton, Jessica Hawkins and Sarah Moore will all be hoping for a strong showing in front of their local crowd.

King finding his form in tough-nut-to-crack Porsche Supercup

Porsche Carrera Cup GB champions have struggled to enjoy the same success when they have stepped onto the world stage in the Porsche Supercup in recent years. For example, Dan Cammish, Josh Webster and Tio Ellinas all failed to top the podium in the competitive series. And it was a similar story for Harry King last year.

The 2020 Carrera Cup GB dominator managed a best result of sixth during a partial 2021 campaign. Although, he was not helped by constantly swapping between the old and new versions of the 911 GT3 Cup car as he raced in Britain and Europe.

But King has been back on form this year, having moved to ultra-successful Lechner Racing. He grabbed a podium at the Imola Supercup opener and then had qualified on the front row in Monaco, only for a yellow-flag infringement to leave him fifth – which is where he finished.

"It's my first full season in Europe – and we've had really good preparation for this year and that's paid off," says King, who adds "it was very reassuring to know the pace is there" despite his Monaco disappointment.

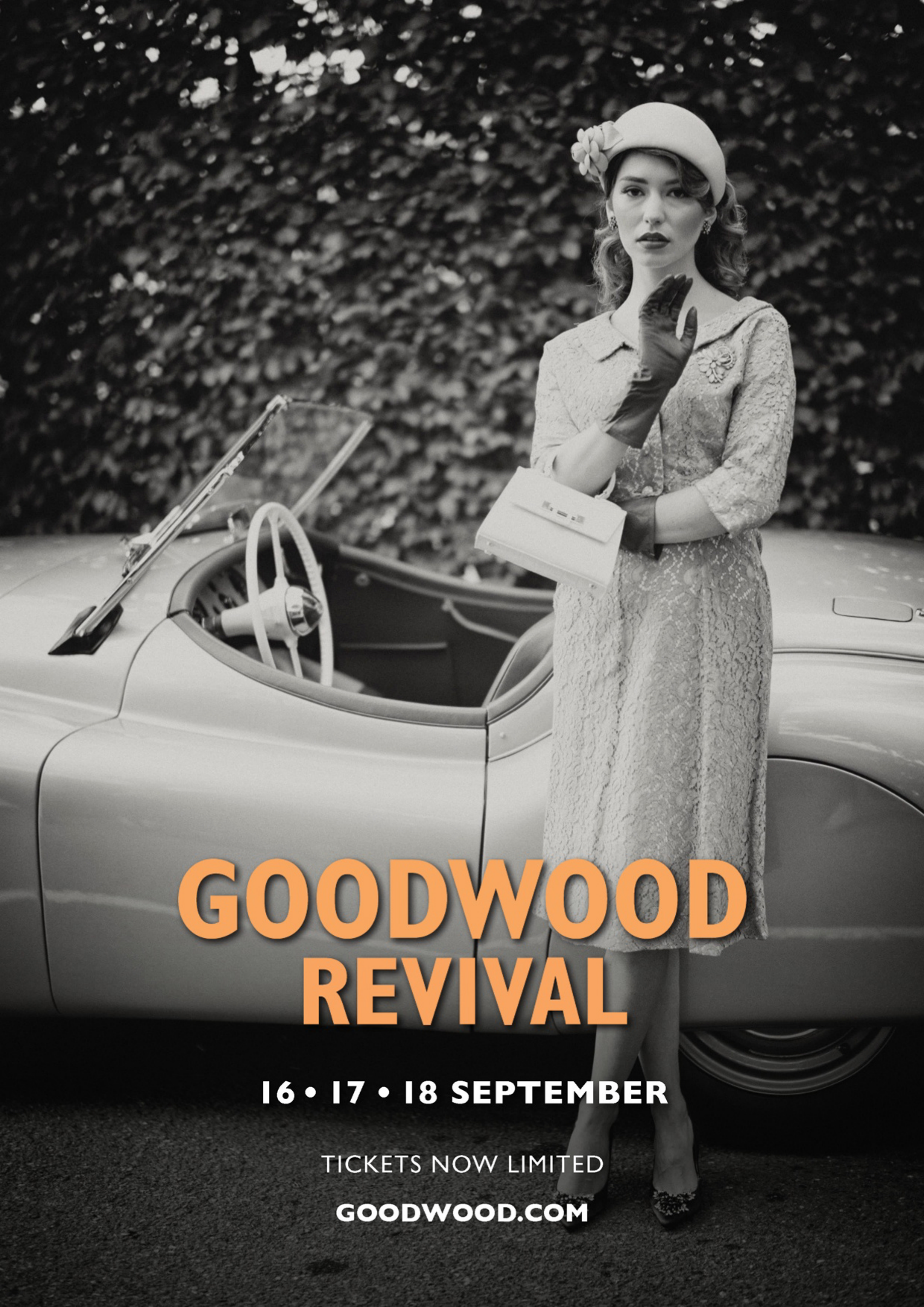
He is combining his Supercup bid with a Carrera Cup Benelux season to maximise his seat time. "I'm taking it round-by-round and using Carrera Cup Benelux as a bit of a springboard into the Supercup weekends," explains King, who leads the Benelux championship.

But despite this weekend's Supercup Silverstone race being his home event, King admits six years of racing on the National layout means he has little experience of the Grand Prix track. "It's probably the circuit I've driven the least on the calendar!" he says. "It's the home of the BRDC, which I'm proudly a member of, as well as the BRDC SuperStars programme, so I'm looking for a strong finish in front of the home crowd."

But there are plenty of rivals to deny King the chance to reign supreme, not least double champion and series leader Larry ten Voorde and 2020 runner-up Dylan Pereira, while last year's Carrera Cup GB frontrunner Lorcan Hanafin will be seeking to improve upon his current best finish of eighth.

PORSCHE AG / HOCH ZWEI

Front-row grid slot at Monaco proves pace is there for Porsche star King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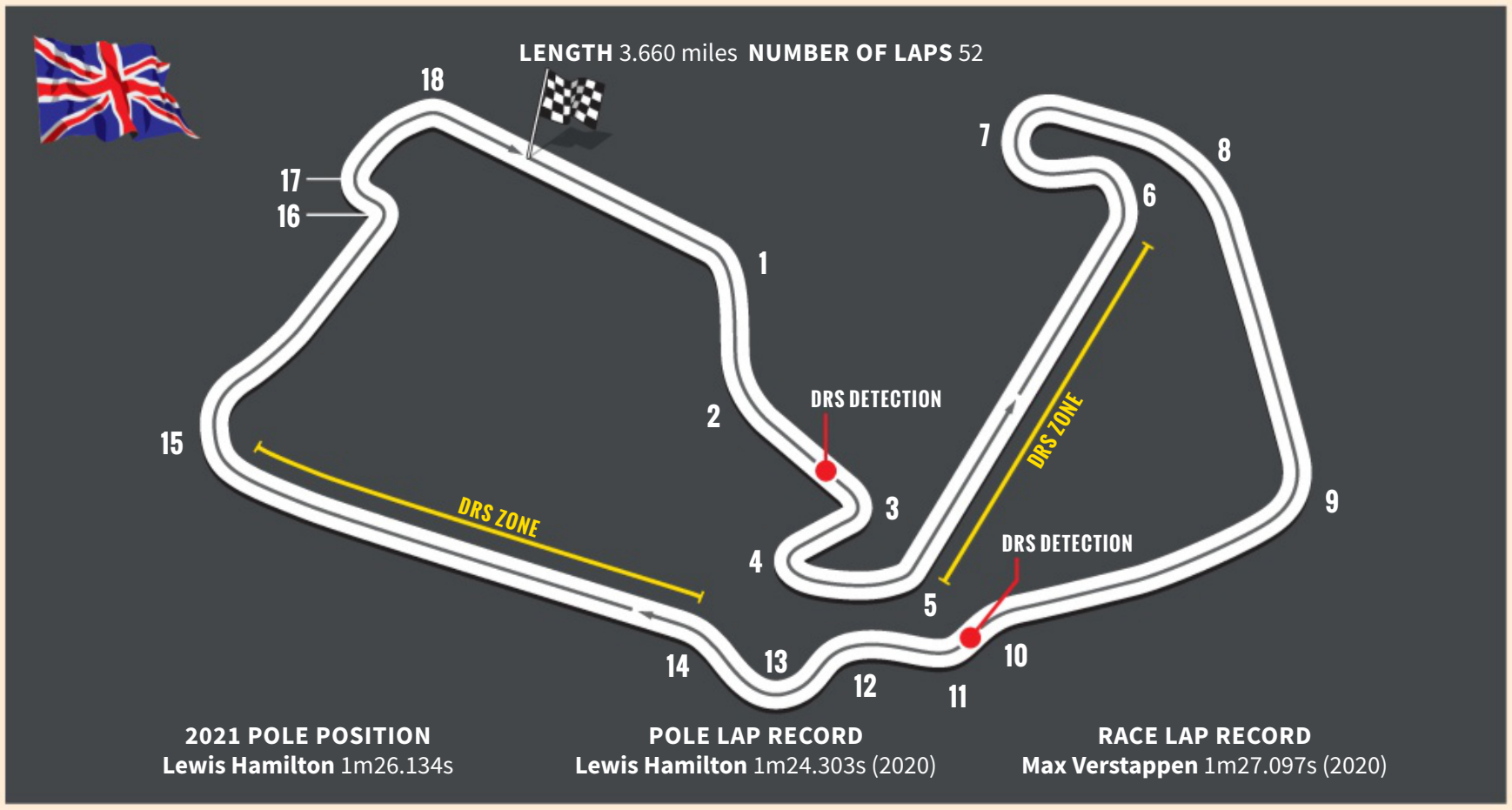
F1 BRITISH GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



UK START TIMES

Friday 1 July
FP1 1300 **FP2** 1600

Saturday 2 July
FP3 1200
QUALIFYING 1500

Sunday 3 July
RACE 1500

CATCH THE RACE LIVE
SKY SPORTS F1
CHANNEL 4

TYRE ALLOCATION

CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	**Verstappen**	175
2	**Perez**	129
3	**Leclerc**	126
4	**Russell**	111
5	**Sainz**	102

Constructors

1	**Red Bull**	304
2	**Ferrari**	228
3	**Mercedes**	188
4	**McLaren**	65
5	**Alpine**	57

Russell: best hope for a home win?

RACE STATS

Previous Silverstone winners

2021	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2020	**Max Verstappen**	Red Bull
2020	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2019	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2018	**Sebastian Vettel**	Ferrari
2017	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2016	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2015	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2014	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2013	**Nico Rosberg**	Mercedes

First Williams F1 win came at Silverstone in 1979 from Clay Regazzoni

Silverstone points tallies

Hamilton	277
Vettel	108
Bottas	107
Alonso	106
Verstappen	87
Ricciardo	79
Leclerc	60
Norris	24
Ocon	24
Sainz	20

RACE CENTRE

Tough Safari fails to stop Rovanpera

The Finnish force of nature took control in Kenya to lead a Toyota 1-2-3-4

TOM HOWARD

PHOTOGRAPHY **McKLEIN**

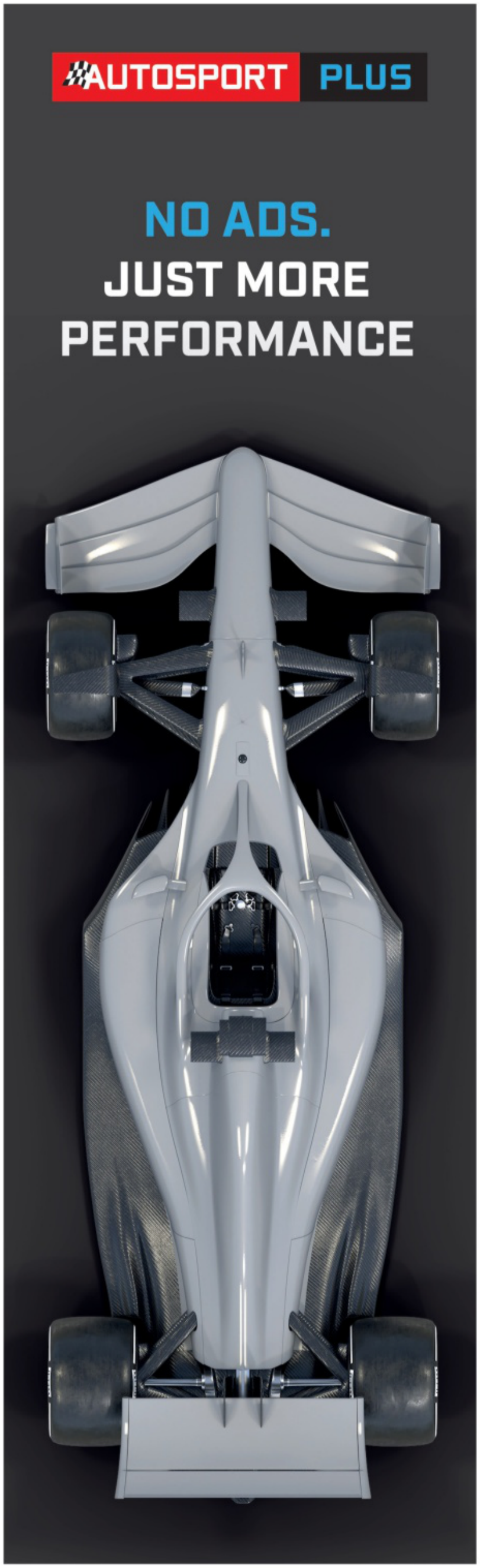
If you were among those who completed the 2022 Safari Rally, then you could count yourself very lucky indeed, or you were driving a Toyota. The second edition of the World Rally Championship's revamped Kenya adventure was far more akin to the punishing marathon of old, where merely finishing this trip into the wilderness is an achievement.

After its return to the WRC calendar 12 months ago following a 19-year hiatus, organisers were happy, but felt it needed to be tougher. On reflection the rally organisers can tick that box as all the crews, and Hyundai and M-Sport in particular, can attest. But perhaps Hyundai's Oliver Solberg summed it best when he said: "This is proper rallying."

While this was a wilder Safari, it couldn't tame the WRC's new force of nature Kalle Rovanpera. The Finn took his fourth win from six rounds (and, incredibly, his third while opening the roads), despite facing a bolstered entry list that included last year's Safari winner Sebastien Ogier, back with Toyota, and nine-time world champion Sebastien Loeb, who rejoined M-Sport for a second taste of Kenya, 20 years after his first. But even rallying's new wonder kid admitted it was the "hardest" of his career to date.

It was a landmark achievement on two fronts, as Rovanpera headed a Toyota 1-2-3-4, a feat the marque last achieved at the 1993 Safari Rally, won by Juha Kankkunen. It also underlined how bulletproof the GR Yaris is as the Safari did its best to highlight weaknesses for rivals Hyundai and M-Sport. »

Toyota dominated as rivals floundered in challenging event



The Safari Rally is deeply ingrained in Kenya's heritage and culture, by virtue of the event being the nation's largest sporting fixture since it was inaugurated in 1953 (when it celebrated the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II). And with COVID-19 restrictions largely reduced since last year's event, it was no surprise that thousands of rally mad locals gathered in Nairobi city centre to greet the drivers as Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta waved off crews, following a party-like opening ceremony.

This atmosphere spilled over into the opening stage held in the grounds of the national sporting stadium, where the crowds were treated to an Ogier-versus-Loeb battle, with the pair pitched together in the head-to-head Super Special. After emerging from clouds of red dust, it was Ogier who managed to get one over on Loeb in the duel to hold a 0.6-second overnight lead over Hyundai's Thierry Neuville. Rovanpera was 11th, 11.6s adrift after almost rolling his GR Yaris, causing a rear puncture. "Nothing really happened, but we had a puncture," said Rovanpera. "That was a big shame. Let's try to focus on the weekend now."

And focus on the weekend he did. By the end of a frantic Friday that offered a glimpse into the gruelling four-day slog for survival, Rovanpera had turned that deficit into 14.6s lead. Before that, though, it seemed that the day would be a battle between Ogier, Elfyn Evans and Loeb.

Loeb (now 48) once again outlined his greatness by winning the first stage proper despite damaging the left rear of his Ford

Neuville, here being passed by Solberg, had a tough time but was still top Hyundai finisher

"We are fighting more with the rally itself than the other guys, it is quite a big challenge"

Puma when he clipped a tree while correcting a pacenote. There were, however, bigger problems on the horizon for the Frenchman on stage four, where Kenya's infamous fesh-fesh sand made it difficult to navigate. "I was lost in my own dust! I had a hairpin and it was full of dust and I didn't know where to go," said Loeb. "The end of the stage is rougher and rougher, so I am not sure we can get through on the second pass."

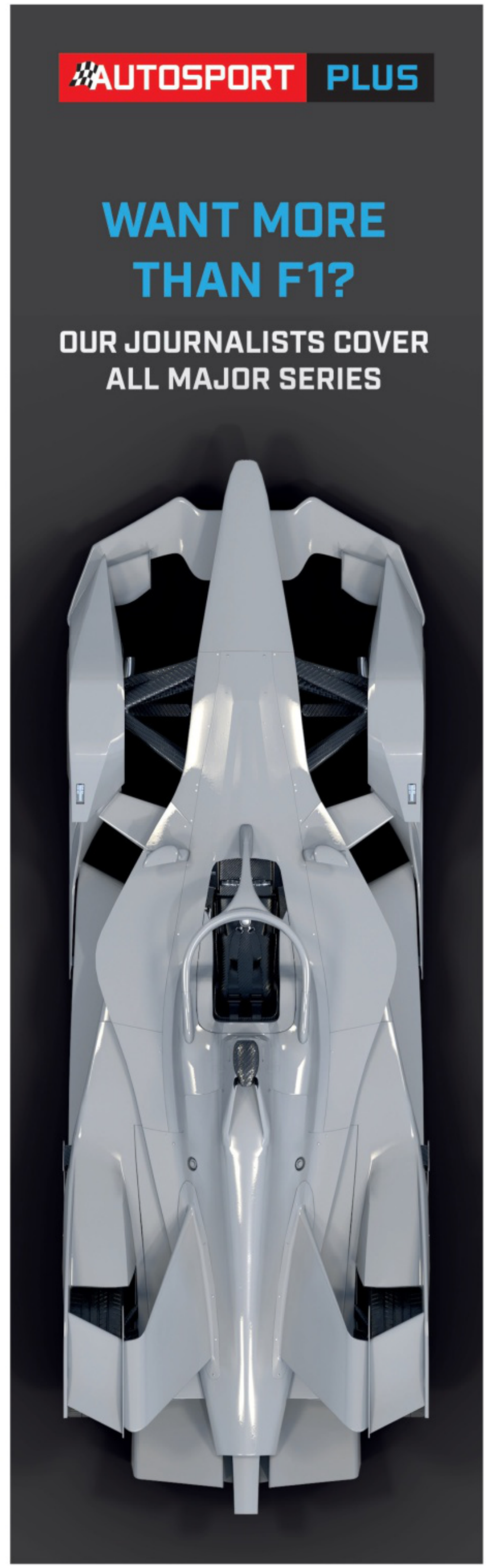
Loeb would not reach the second pass because a small fire broke out in the engine bay at the end of the stage. Once it was extinguished by co-driver Isabelle Galmiche, the engine couldn't be restarted, leaving the Puma reduced to EV power for the trip back to service in Naivasha. Unfortunately, the battery depleted itself with help just five kilometres away. Loeb would return on Saturday.

Loeb's fate was just one part of an M-Sport collapse. Gus Greensmith, sitting fourth overall, one spot behind Loeb, had suffered a right-rear puncture that cost him 13 minutes to fix just moments earlier. And on the following test, team-mate Adrien Fourmaux, sitting eighth, retired following a transmission failure.

That left Craig Breen as the sole works Puma in the fight until Friday's last stage, when a puncture followed by a broken steering arm sent him into retirement from sixth spot, effectively ending the team's podium hopes after one day. "I can't remember when we lost all three points-scoring cars on the first day," said M-Sport boss Malcolm Wilson. "Unfortunately the piece that failed [on Loeb's car] probably cost about 10p."

Hyundai didn't fare much better. While Ott Tanak was blasting through Kenya's Savannah, his gearlever snapped off in his hands, costing him 36.4s on the day's first stage. Quick thinking from the 2019 world champion ensured a fix was made by attaching a wheel brace to the remains of the lever. "The lever is gone and you need to figure out how to continue; panicking is never going to take you forward," said Tanak. "We are fighting more with the rally itself than the other guys, it is quite a big challenge."

Neuville, meanwhile, suffered gearbox issues before his i20 N ingested a large gulp of fesh-fesh sand that reduced his engine power. A left-front puncture during the day's last stage also cost him time. The third Hyundai entry driven by Solberg was not without its mechanical issues, but reached the end of the day in seventh despite Solberg admitting it was "the roughest ride" of his life. »



At the front, Toyota dominated and Ogier led the way before briefly handing the lead to Evans after his Toyota inbox ingested some sand. A puncture for Evans allowed Ogier to reclaim the lead, only for drama to strike on the day's final stage, a test that teams had questioned whether it should go ahead given how difficult it was for cars to tiptoe through the sand. The Frenchman suffered a left-rear puncture — his fourth in three rallies. That cost him two minutes, dropping him from the lead to sixth behind Tanak and Neuville. "It is always frustrating when there is nothing you can do differently, once again I lost the Pirelli lottery," said Ogier.

There were no such problems for Rovanpera, who scored three stage wins, his time on stage seven firing him into a 14.6s lead over Takamoto Katsuta, with Evans third.

It was Saturday's six-stage leg where the fight for victory

"It is frustrating when there is nothing you can do differently, again I lost the Pirelli lottery"

Katsuta followed up his second on the 2021 Safari with third spot this time

turned into a two-horse race. Evans managed to leapfrog Katsuta, who would lose further time to a puncture, to move into second spot, and the Welshman set his sights on Rovanpera.

Evans managed to reduce the gap to 15s but, similar to Rally Portugal in May, Rovanpera conjured up another piece of magic when a rain shower turned the once dry gravel into a mud bath. The Finn was brave in desperately difficult conditions as he drifted through the mud to put clear daylight between himself and Evans, with a 40.3s lead after stage 13. Evans was, however, severely hampered by a windscreen wiper issue that left him peering through a muddy screen.

Rovanpera, who started the day feeling unwell, reckoned his recent outings in drifting events helped give him an edge, but he wasn't about to get complacent. "I was using some techniques with the throttle that I use in drifting," he said. "As we have seen here, nothing is OK [in terms of the lead] until the finish line."

Toyota locked out the top four positions as Ogier climbed to fourth when Hyundai's reliability woes were laid bare once again. Tanak retired from fourth after grinding to a halt with a transmission issue on stage 10. He would return on Sunday before a power-steering failure ended his rally.

It was also a familiar tale of heartbreak for Neuville when an alternator failed, requiring him to turn mechanic again to fix. The effort came to nothing when his i20 N's engine flooded in the afternoon's wet stages, costing him four minutes. The Belgian managed to coax the engine back to life only to hit a tree 200 metres further into the stage.

TOMASZ KALINSKI

Ogier's bad luck meant he was two minutes down in Toyota's 1-2-3-4

At M-Sport, Kenya continued to bite hard. Greensmith retired his Puma after a slow roll damaged his engine's cooling. The Briton was forced to kick the windscreen out of his car to allow himself and co-driver to exit the vehicle while marshals refused to assist despite the car showing a 'safe to touch' green light. "We were stuck in the car for three minutes because the marshals wouldn't help," said an angry Greensmith. "If the car was green, which it was, there is no reason why the marshals shouldn't have helped." It did provide a 'Mad Max' moment when Greensmith managed to right the car and continued sans windscreen, wearing goggles. "I really don't want to be saying this but it was quite enjoyable [driving with the goggles], but at 100mph it's quite hard to breathe."

Fourmaux suffered his second retirement due to a suspension failure after receiving a puncture from hitting a rock. It prompted M-Sport to put the two drivers to work on repairing the cars for Sunday when they returned to service. "It was a good opportunity to give them a chance to get used to how to change things if it happens again," said M-Sport team principal Richard Millener. "It's also important for them to understand what the mechanics go through as well."

Equipped with a healthy lead, Rovanpera then produced a measured drive to successfully navigate the Safari's last offering on Sunday to seal a memorable win that extended his championship lead over Neuville to a whopping 65 points. Evans was left to settle for his second podium of the season, while Katsuta claimed a well-deserved third as Ogier completed the historic Toyota sweep.

Neuville provided a brief moment of joy for Hyundai by winning the powerstage to bank five bonus points on his way to finishing fifth, almost 11 minutes adrift, while a recovering Breen rejoined the fray to finish sixth in front of M-Sport privateer Jourdan Serderidis.

Loeb provided a glimpse at what could have been with two fastest times in the final three stages on his way to eighth, with WRC2 runner Kajetan Kajetanowicz ninth. Solberg nursed a wounded Hyundai, which forced organisers to cancel the day's first stage after he had become stranded in the middle of the road, to round out the top 10.

To cap a brutal Safari, Kenya could have a new rally star on its hands: 26-year-old Maxine Wahome claimed the WRC3 class, becoming the first woman to win a WRC support class since Isolde Holderied's triumph in Group N in 1994.

POWERED BY motorsport STATS

ROVANPERA: SAFARI WIN THE HARDEST OF MY WRC CAREER

Toyota's Kalle Rovanpera labelled his latest World Rally Championship victory at Safari Rally Kenya as the "hardest" of his career to date. The 21-year-old felt Kenya's unique conditions required intense concentration to avoid finding trouble on his way to a commanding win.

"I have to say, this was the hardest rally I have ever done and to be honest we just have to thank the team," said Rovanpera. "Of course it [the win] is quite important because it is a special event. You know, if you manage to win it, it's quite nice and for Toyota it has been an important race.

"I think it's the toughest because of how much you have to concentrate and manage the car to keep it moving over the fesh-fesh sand, there are so many situations where normally you don't need to take care. Normally all you have to worry about is driving fast, but here you have to manage to get through."

After Toyota failed to land a podium in the previous round in Sardinia, team boss Jari-Matti Latvala was extremely proud of the work of his team, especially after an engine scare following Wednesday's shakedown. "It was 29 years ago the last time [Toyota scored a 1-2-3-4] in Safari so if that happens after every 30 years it is a very rare situation," said Latvala. "For sure, I can be really proud of the team and the drivers, the work they have done is really amazing.

"The drivers were driving exactly the way this kind of rally need to be driven. It's not the fastest but the smartest way.

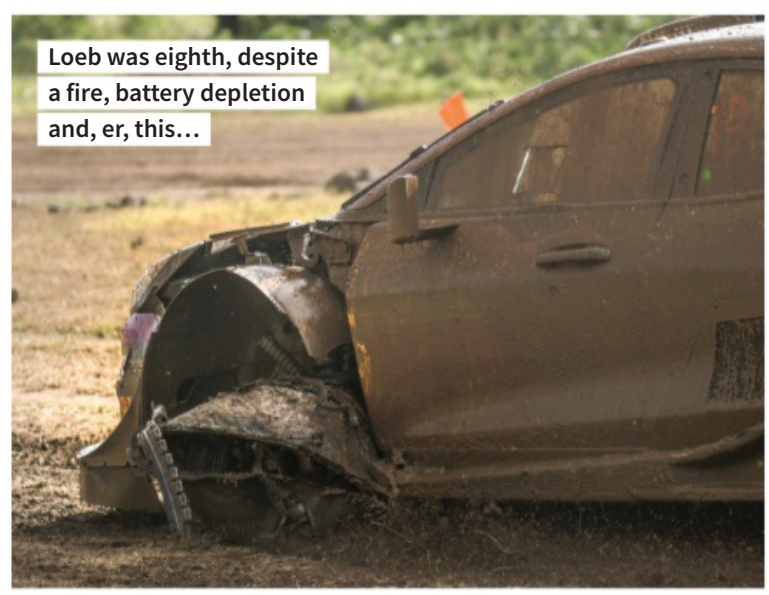
"I think it's just the work that we have done. I can tell you after shakedown the drivers came back and had a feeling that the engines were quite hot and we were a little bit scared, but all the work the team did paid off. It's not a matter of luck but a matter of how well you prepare."

RESULTS ROUND 6/13, SAFARI RALLY KENYA, 23-26 JUNE

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	**Kalle Rovanpera** (FIN) **Jonne Halttunen** (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	3h40m24.9s
2	**Elfyn Evans** (GBR) **Scott Martin** (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+52.8s
3	**Takamoto Katsuta** (JPN) **Aaron Johnston** (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT NG / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+1m42.7s
4	**Sebastien Ogier** (FRA) **Benjamin Veillas** (FRA)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+2m10.3s
5	**Thierry Neuville** (BEL) **Martijn Wydaeghe** (BEL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+10m40.9s
6	**Craig Breen** (IRL) **Paul Nagle** (IRL)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+23m27.9s
7	**Jourdan Serderidis** (GRC) **Frederic Miclotte** (BEL)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+31m00.5s
8	**Sebastien Loeb** (FRA) **Isabelle Galmiche** (FRA)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+32m12.6s
9	**Kajetan Kajetanowicz** (POL) **Maciek Szczepaniak** (POL)	Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo	+36m57.6s
10	**Oliver Solberg** (SWE) **Elliott Edmondson** (GBR)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+37m36.6s
OTHERS			
14	**Adrien Fourmaux** (FRA) **Alexandre Coria** (FRA)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+1h19m27.7s
15	**Gus Greensmith** (GBR) **Jonas Andersson** (SWE)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+1h19m32.1s
R	**Ott Tanak** (EST) **Martin Jarveoja** (EST)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	SS12-power steering

STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 **Super Special Kasarani** (3.01 miles)	Ogier 3m18.8s	**Ogier**	Neuville +0.6s
SS2 **Loldia 1** (11.91 miles)	Loeb 14m18.8s	**Ogier**	Evans +0.9s
SS3 **Geothermal 1** (7.26 miles)	Rovanpera 6m44.2s	**Ogier**	Evans +0.8s
SS4 **Kedong 1** (19.42 miles)	Rovanpera 17m29.9s	**Evans**	Ogier +8.5s
SS5 **Loldia 2** (11.91 miles)	Ogier 14m05.2s	**Ogier**	Katsuta +8.2s
SS6 **Geothermal 2** (7.26 miles)	Ogier 6m41.4s	**Ogier**	Katsuta +8.6s
SS7 **Kedong 2** (19.42 miles)	Rovanpera 17m43.2s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +22.4s
SS8 **Soysambu 1** (18.22 miles)	Evans 18m14.2s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +16.1s
SS9 **Elmenteita 1** (9.37 miles)	Neuville 8m37.0s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +15.0s
SS10 **Sleeping Warrior 1** (19.29 miles)	Neuville 17m18.1s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +19.4s
SS11 **Soysambu 2** (18.22 miles)	Evans 18m05.3s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +15.8s
SS12 **Elmenteita 2** (9.37 miles)	Rovanpera 9m47.1s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +27.1s
SS13 **Sleeping Warrior 2** (19.29 miles)	Ogier 19m19.1s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +40.3s
SS14 **Oserian 1** (11.14 miles)	Fourmaux 11m42.1s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +40.3s
SS15 **Narasha 1** (8.26 miles)	Rovanpera 6m56.6s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +47.6s
SS16 **Hell's Gate 1** (6.54 miles)	Tanak 5m51.5s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +56.6s
SS17 **Oserian 2** (9.21 miles)	Loeb 9m05.7s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +1m02.3s
SS18 **Narasha 2** (8.26 miles)	Loeb 6m59.2s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +57.6s
SS19 **Hell's Gate 2** (powerstage) (6.54 miles)	Neuville 6m00.4s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +52.8s



Loeb was eighth, despite a fire, battery depletion and, er, this…

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Rovanpera 145; 2 **Neuville** 80; 3 **Tanak** 62; 4 **Katsuta** 62; 5 **Breen** 60; 6 **Evans** 57; 7 **Loeb** 35; 8 **Ogier** 34; 9 **Sordo** 34; 10 **Greensmith** 28.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 246; 2 **Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT** 184; 3 M-**Sport Ford WRT** 144; 4 **Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT NG** 68.

NEXT REPORT

RALLY ESTONIA
21 JULY ISSUE

BTCC CROFT

Out of wreckage comes joy for Lloyd

The popular and highly rated Excelr8 Hyundai newcomer suffered the biggest low of his career at Oulton Park. What a difference two weeks make

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY **JEP** motorsport IMAGES

Dan Lloyd put himself through an emotional wringer of financial and physical pain for the best part of two weeks, and then everything came flooding out as he crossed the finish line at Croft last Sunday. He was a deserving, popular and hard-fighting British Touring Car Championship race winner for the first time in four years, and the tears flowed freely – and not just from him either. Then, a couple of hours later, he did it all over again, as if winning BTCC races was a habit.

Two Sundays earlier, Lloyd had left Oulton Park bound for hospital following a 43G impact in a final-race smash with Colin Turkington. In Cheshire, he'd looked a genuine contender for the first time since joining the Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai squad for 2022. His form had finally backed up the gut feelings of many in the BTCC, that here was a talented guy who just needed the right opportunity, and that his seat at the Suffolk team alongside the established Tom Ingram was just as tantalising as that of another long-time underdog's: Jake Hill's alongside Turkington in the West Surrey Racing BMW line-up.

The accident threatened to ruin that all. Lloyd's injuries were minor, especially given the circumstances, but he needed to battle back to fitness. And, while the wounded #123 Hyundai i30 N was straightened out at BTCC chassis wizard Willie Poole's facility, Lloyd threw himself into a fight to rescue the rest of his season. The repairs cost £95,000 (plus the not insignificant VAT), money he doesn't have, but by hook or by crook he pledged to see out the 2022 campaign.

Second race, and Lloyd is keeping Ingram and Turkington at bay

Family celebration. Lloyd is greeted after double Croft success

No wonder his subsequent success was well-received by all and, to watch the Hyundai on track, there was no evidence of what had happened just two weeks earlier. The car looked well sorted, its driver ragging it nicely in typical Lloyd fashion. That resulted in third on the grid, one spot and 0.013 seconds ahead of title-contending team-mate Ingram (albeit Lloyd was allowed 12s of hybrid use to the 1.5s of Ingram), just 0.063s from poleman Turkington's WSR BMW 330e M Sport. Both of the second-row Hyundai men, along with third-row starters Gordon Shedden and Hill, had set theoretical best laps quicker than Turkington's in a scrappy session of three red flags.

"I'm over the moon, and I feel absolutely exhausted now," sighed Lloyd. "Even if the crash hadn't happened, P3 is still an amazing result. It's been everything... physically, mentally, the car rebuilt from scratch, the chassis repaired. I went up and down an airfield in it — everything felt normal, nothing fell off! Then yesterday [Friday's shakedown] was a physical test for me, but I got out and I was happy with how

"I feel exhausted. It's been everything... physically, mentally, the car rebuilt, the chassis repaired"

I felt. I'd been worrying all day, but last night I was really buzzing. If you think about the crash damage [and the financial worries], nine times out of 10 you'll put yourself in trouble, so better not to."

Certainly Lloyd seemed not to be entertaining any such doubts on the opening lap of race one. First to fall to the ferocity of his charge was Dan Rowbottom, who had qualified his Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R nicely on the front row and was dispatched into Clervaux. And then the Hyundai latched onto Turkington.

As good as gone, seemingly, are the days of rear-wheel-drive potency in the early stages of a BTCC race. The BMWs and Infinitis were given a cut to their starting boost allowance at Oulton and, while they still get off the line with perhaps a small advantage over their front-driven rivals, it now appears that this is being more than »

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cancelled out by the time taken to warm up their front tyres. The mutterings from within WSR, whose boss Dick Bennetts celebrated his 75th birthday on Sunday, are becoming increasingly exasperated, the gist that rear-wheel-drive competitors are now allowed none of the advantages of running that format, while simultaneously paying the price for the natural disadvantages.

Lloyd slingshotted through the chicane and drew alongside Turkington to the outside into Tower. The BMW covered the inside line, allowing Lloyd to get the undercut on the exit and complete the move with a hugely brave, lairy pass around the outside into the Jim Clark Esses, the Hyundai squirming on the limit as its committed pilot pulled it off. Ninety-five grand? Pah. "I can't wait to watch that move back," he enthused. "That was a lap of determination from the last couple of weeks."

As a result of that, he had to be pretty determined for the rest of the race. Turkington stayed on Lloyd's case throughout, although two safety car interludes helped the leader's cause. First, the BMW had to get its front tyres up to temperature again ("Your're not going quick enough to generate heat in the front axle, you're almost starting again," said Turkington); second, the natural rhythm of an uninterrupted race would cause the front-wheel-drive contenders' front Goodyears to fade relatively quickly.

Lloyd would pull away over the first two sectors comprising mainly the quicker corners, then Turkington would reel him in during the technical final part of the course.

Two weeks after they were both injured, Turkington and Lloyd shared podium

A final-lap bid drew the Northern Irishman to the outside into the Complex, "but then the bit of road I was going for started to disappear, so I thought, 'It's race one, let's take P2'". Lloyd reckoned "it was a little bit sketchy in the high-speed stuff, especially braking into Sunny In, then I was vulnerable and on the back foot defending. God, he nearly got me on the last lap, it was so close."

A tweak to the Hyundai sorted that for race two, where Lloyd headed a 1-2 for the Excelr8 squad. Ingram had finished fourth behind Rowbottom in the opener, but this time got the Honda off the line, and emulated Lloyd's first-race Tower/Jim Clark Esses move on Turkington to claim second place, although in this case it appeared less on the edge. Ingram's pressure on Lloyd wasn't quite as intense as Turkington's earlier, but it wasn't easy by any means.

"The only reason why it was OK was I just had a little bit of a gap," admitted Lloyd. "He's fighting for the championship, he's one of the top boys, but that little gap just made life much easier. And I've never had this situation with hybrid [as winner of race one, Lloyd had a 10-lap deduction]. He'd come up like a rocketship, and I would just have to hang on before I could use it for the next lap." Ingram closed onto Lloyd's bumper with a lap remaining, but had no hybrid left, while Lloyd had enough for a final burst to secure his advantage.

For Ingram, that was the opposite to »

SHEDDEN GETTING THE DYNAMICS RIGHT

It was win number 52 for #52 in the BTCC at Croft, when Gordon Shedden strolled away from the field in the finale. It was entirely predictable, not only because he had the similar but much-slower-in-a-straight-line Honda of Josh Cook bottling up the field, but also because he was genuinely quick last weekend. Indeed, this was one of those not uncommon reversed-grid races where the win was set up by a setback followed by an excellent recovery.

Team Dynamics was on form. Dan Rowbottom put things together nicely to qualify on the front row, with Shedden on the third. "Our overall pace was good," said the Scot. "It was just the way the red flags fell. Jesus, come on… And then Rory [Butcher, his brother-in-law] blocked me of all people!"

This set up reversed-grid success…

Shedden's day appeared to have been ruined when contact with Ash Sutton at Clervaux at the beginning of race one broke his left-front suspension. But, on a day when overtaking was at a premium, Shedden hammered from 28th to 12th in race two, and then had a bit of luck when he got drawn on reversed-grid pole.

The win was a cruise. "I just feel that we should have done more today," reflected 'Flash'. "We were in a position to score big in all three races today, but at least we salvaged something. The car feels good just now; we're there or thereabouts. It's just luck that's not going our way, apart from that draw for race three!"

Rowbottom too had a strong Sunday. He was third in race one, before a fifth in the sequel, despite front-left tyre and suspension toeing out from an early knock. "It was shocking on right-handers – not what you need on a clockwise circuit," quipped team boss Matt Neal. He was on for seventh in the finale before a puncture forced him out on the penultimate lap.

the opening race, where the second of the safety cars scuppered his hybrid strategy in his pursuit of Rowbottom and meant he still had three laps remaining at the finish. As at Oulton, Ingram was delighted with his Hyundai. Unlike at Oulton, he didn't win, but "I was happy to be boring, to be scoring points. I didn't want to be taking any risks. If you know where to position your car at Croft, it's very easy to defend."

And once again Turkington spent a race studying the rear of a Hyundai — just a different one on this occasion. The double podium, backed up by a sixth in the finale, was a spectacular return considering where he'd ended Oulton. Turkington's wrecked new-for-2022 chassis is hors de combat until the next round at Knockhill, so his 2019 title winner was pressed into service thanks to the kind permission of its new owner — just as well that's Turkington's dad! It's also 7kg heavier than the new car. But WSR did a superb job prepping a machine that needed to be converted to hybrid in a week and a bit.

"I'm happy we've salvaged something, but it's not all smiley faces and hugs and kisses"

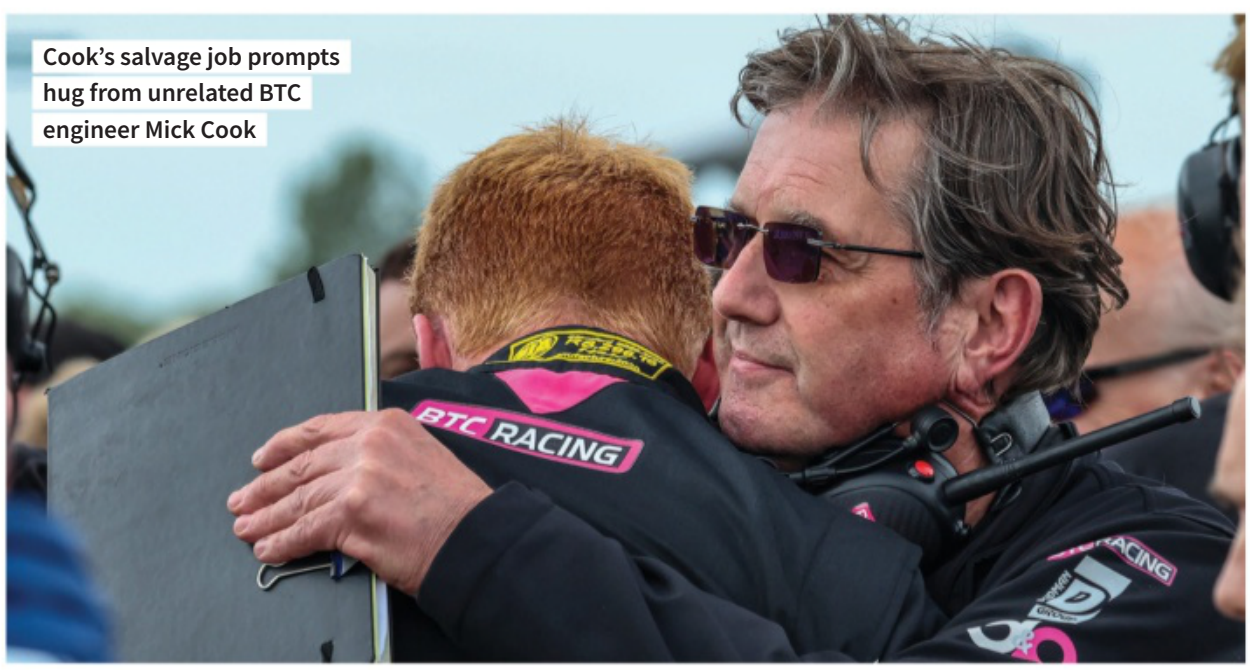
Hill led Sutton for much of the day, but their paths diverged in the last race

And Turkington did the job — well, as much as he could. "Two podiums has been a good return," he nodded. "But we just don't seem to have an answer to the pace of the Hyundai, which is frustrating. Croft is normally our patch, but on the run to Tower and the Jim Clark Esses, that's where they're pulling away. We're really strong in the third sector, the change of direction and that stuff, but we don't have the pace in the first couple of laps."

While Ingram has taken the lead of the championship, Turkington is third, just 12 points off the summit, while team-mate Hill is not too far adrift in fifth. This was the kind of weekend the WSR newboy needed to start putting together. A shot at pole was scuppered when he was baulked, and he also suffered intermittently from a locking rear axle, before he strung together two fifths and a fourth on race day. "It's a very good day in the office," he smiled, "but we're struggling simply because so much has been chopped from us with start boost and engine power. It's killing us compared to the Hyundai."

Also in there, of course, is Josh Cook. The BTC Racing Honda squad had a nightmare at Croft, and Cook lost his points lead to Ingram in race two. Then came a very lucky break with a reversed-grid front row, and he used all his racecraft to fend off the Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla of Rory Butcher for second place while Shedden disappeared up the road to victory. That result mitigated the disaster for Cook, who cut his deficit to Ingram to three points.

"It's just straightline speed," groaned Cook. "The chassis has been good, but we lack a lot in overall performance — that's not the chassis, it's in the powertrain. We've got a serious problem on our hands with the engine if we can't sort something out before Snetterton [scene of next month's mid-season test]. I'm happy we've salvaged something from the weekend, but it's not all smiley faces and hugs and kisses. Without that grid draw we'd have been nowhere. Sometimes the BTCC can be kind to you and help you when you need it, but sometimes it can kick you when you're down. We've got a lot of work to do."



Cook's salvage job prompts hug from unrelated BTC engineer Mick Cook

The other leading contender is Ash Sutton. This was a tricky weekend for the Motorbase Performance Ford Focus operation, with an odd free practice team-specific tyre issue that affected braking and sent Sutton off the road in FP1 and Dan Cammish into the barriers in FP2. There was no repeat, and Cammish should have joined Sutton comfortably in the top 10 in qualifying had he not been badly baulked.

Sutton raced strongly to sixth in each of the opening two races, before double contact with Tom Chilton's Excelr8 Hyundai scuppered his finale, damaging the front toelink at the hairpin and the rear in a heavier clash at Clervaux. "We didn't have the pace of the Hyundais," mused Sutton. "They were very, very strong this weekend. And when you've got three of them to fight [high up the order] it's a different battle..."

The best of them at Croft, Lloyd, has had his fair share of his own battles. Not least in race three, where an overheating engine — "The oil temperature was at 140" — restricted him to 11th. Thank goodness that didn't happen earlier to ruin his superb weekend and the BTCC's feel-good story.

P70 SUPPORTS REPORT
Turn to National Autosport for all the action from the TOCA support series

POWERED BY motorsport STATS

RESULTS ROUND 5/10, CROFT (GBR), 26 JUNE RACE 1 (18 LAPS – 37.802 MILES)

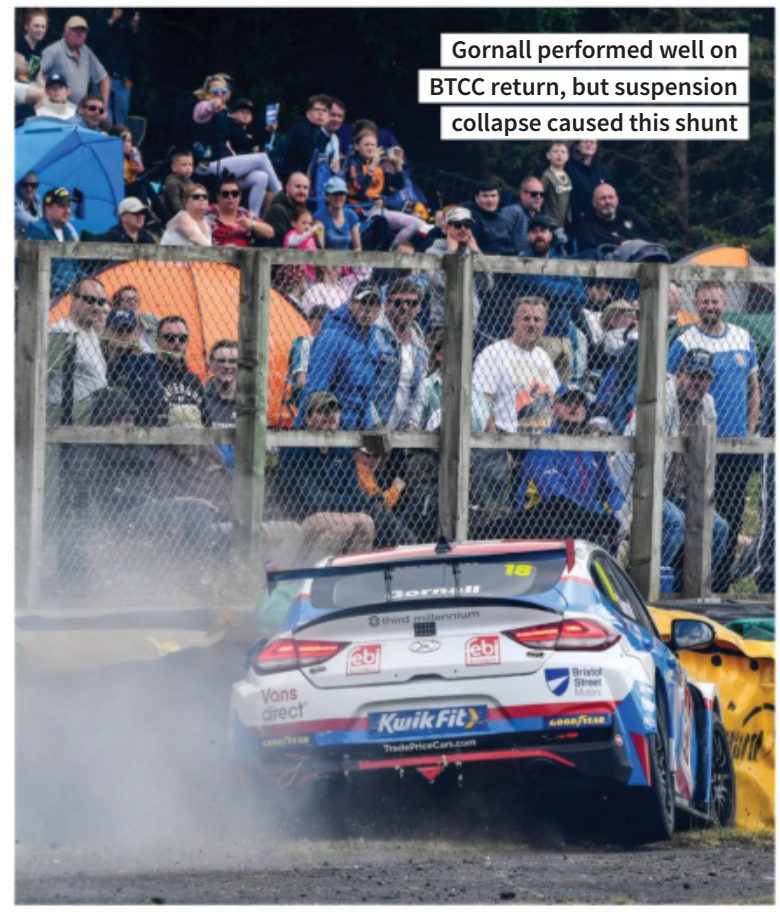
POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	**Dan Lloyd** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	28m10.977s
2	**Colin Turkington** (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+0.377s
3	**Dan Rowbottom** (GBR)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	+0.779s
4	**Tom Ingram** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+1.167s
5	**Jake Hill** (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+2.209s
6	**Ash Sutton** (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+2.734s
7	**Rory Butcher** (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+3.447s
8	**Aiden Moffat** (GBR)	Laser Tools Racing / Infiniti Q50	+3.747s
9	**George Gamble** (GBR)	Ciceley Motorsport / BMW 330e M Sport	+4.345s
10	**Tom Chilton** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+5.394s
11	**Stephen Jelley** (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+5.669s
12	**Bobby Thompson** (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+6.362s
13	**Dan Cammish** (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+6.774s
14	**James Gornall** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+7.395s
15	**Josh Cook** (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+7.899s
16	**Michael Crees** (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+8.949s
17	**Jason Plato** (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+10.105s
18	**Ash Hand** (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+10.734s
19	**Adam Morgan** (GBR)	Ciceley Motorsport / BMW 330e M Sport	+11.008s
20	**Dexter Patterson** (GBR)	Laser Tools Racing / Infiniti Q50	+11.181s
21	**Sam Osborne** (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+13.436s
22	**Jade Edwards** (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+14.265s
23	**Nicolas Hamilton** (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	+15.687s
24	**Ricky Collard** (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	-1 lap
R	**Aron Taylor-Smith** (IRL)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	12 laps-accident
R	**Will Powell** (GBR)	Team Hard / Cupra Leon	11 laps-puncture
R	**Ollie Jackson** (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	1 lap-accident
R	**Gordon Shedden** (GBR)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	1 lap-suspension

Winner's average speed 80.48mph. **Fastest lap** **Ingram** 1m22.327s, 91.83mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Turkington 1m21.468s; 2 **Rowbottom** 1m21.495s; 3 **Lloyd** 1m21.531s; 4 **Ingram** 1m21.544s; 5 **Shedden** 1m21.580s; 6 **Hill** 1m21.636s; 7 **Sutton** 1m21.785s; 8 **Chilton** 1m21.797s; 9 **Gamble** 1m21.822s; 10 **Moffat** 1m21.828s; 11 **Butcher** 1m21.833s; 12 **Jelley** 1m21.921s; 13 **Thompson** 1m21.929s; 14 **Cammish** 1m21.987s; 15 **Gornall** 1m22.009s; 16 **Collard** 1m22.027s; 17 **Morgan** 1m22.043s; 18 **Plato** 1m22.069s; 19 **Jackson** 1m22.271s; 20 **Cook** 1m22.280s; 21 **Crees** 1m22.299s; 22 **Osborne** 1m22.329s; 23 **Hand** 1m22.395s; 24 **Taylor-Smith** 1m22.736s; 25 **Edwards** 1m22.781s; 26 **Hamilton** 1m23.731s; 27 **Powell** 1m24.103s; 28 **Patterson** no time.

Butcher, leading Moffat, raced well after Toyota was off pace in qualifying



Gornall performed well on BTCC return, but suspension collapse caused this shunt

GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1.

RACE 2 (18 LAPS – 37.802 MILES)

1 Lloyd 26m55.725s; 2 **Ingram** +0.634s; 3 **Turkington** +1.156s; 4 **Hill** +2.490s; 5 **Rowbottom** +4.586s; 6 **Sutton** +5.516s; 7 **Butcher** +6.719s; 8 **Moffat** +9.905s; 9 **Chilton** +11.442s; 10 **Jelley** +11.842s; 11 **Cook** +12.457s; 12 **Shedden** +12.883s; 13 **Cammish** +14.384s; 14 **Thompson** +14.766s; 15 **Morgan** +15.075s; 16 **Plato** +21.244s; 17 **Hand** +21.864s; 18 **Patterson** +23.409s; 19 **Osborne** +25.003s; 20 **Jackson** +26.004s; 21 **Taylor-Smith** +26.572s; 22 **Hamilton** +31.676s; 23 **Edwards** +32.529s; 24 **Powell** +40.882s; 25 **Collard** -2 laps; R **Gamble** 16 laps-misfire; R **Gornall** 3 laps-suspension/accident; R **Crees** 3 laps-accident damage.

Winner's average speed 84.22mph.

Fastest lap **Ingram** 1m21.863s, 92.35mph.

GRID RACE 3 Decided by result of Race 2, with top 12 reversed.

RACE 3 (15 LAPS – 31.502 MILES)

1 Shedden 20m52.233s; 2 **Cook** +2.528s; 3 **Butcher** +3.251s; 4 **Jelley** +3.837s; 5 **Hill** +4.093s; 6 **Turkington** +4.404s; 7 **Ingram** +10.404s; 8 **Cammish** +12.965s; 9 **Chilton** +13.472s; 10 **Morgan** +13.942s; 11 **Lloyd** +14.294s; 12 **Thompson** +15.129s; 13 **Hand** +16.181s; 14 **Plato** +20.008s; 15 **Jackson** +24.315s; 16 **Patterson** +24.446s; 17 **Gornall** +25.442s; 18 **Collard** +25.879s; 19 **Gamble** +26.361s; 20 **Osborne** +27.128s; 21 **Hamilton** +32.553s; 22 **Powell** -1 lap; R **Rowbottom** 14 laps-puncture; R **Taylor-Smith** 13 laps-lost power; NC **Edwards** 12 laps; NC **Sutton** 11 laps; R **Crees** 10 laps-spun off; R **Moffat** 7 laps-damage.

Winner's average speed 90.56mph.

Fastest lap **Shedden** 1m22.165s, 92.01mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Ingram 195; 2 **Cook** 192; 3 **Turkington** 183; 4 **Sutton** 171; 5 **Hill** 154; 6 **Butcher** 137; 7 **Shedden** 132; 8 **Lloyd** 131; 9 **Morgan** 101; 10 **Rowbottom** 90.

NEXT EVENT

KNOCKHILL 4 AUGUST ISSUE

If those BMWs can't get up the hill quickly out of the hairpin, it must be time to change the rules

JEP

Mansell heads another great Goodwood extravaganza

World champions, emotional returns and a new hill record were just some of the highlights of the 2022 Festival of Speed

PHOTOGRAPHY **HAWKINS AND JEP** motorsport IMAGES

As Formula 1's 2022 season approaches its summer break, the Goodwood Festival of Speed served as a timely reminder for fans, drivers and teams alike to step back and appreciate a four-day celebration of motorsport.

The usual marvellous mix of machinery from across the spectrum of racing disciplines is a given at Goodwood, as is the plethora of legends who come to drive them. Among the highlights of the event was Nigel Mansell, who was reunited with 'Red 5' on Sunday 30 years after taking the iconic Williams FW14B to glory, while fellow F1 champions Sir Jackie Stewart, Damon Hill, Mika Hakkinen and Jenson Button also sampled a range of machinery.

Another emotional reunion with a machine from 1992 came with three-time 500cc motorcycle world champion Wayne Rainey, who got back in the saddle of his Yamaha YZR500 in public for the first time since his career-ending accident at the 1993 Italian Grand Prix.

While the drivers and riders thrilled the fans, this year's theme focused on 'The Innovators — Masterminds of Motorsport', a fitting choice as the official and unofficial hillclimb records were broken by the remarkable McMurtry Automotive Speirling.

As Max Chilton's 39.08s run (see page 47) displayed the capabilities of fan technology over four decades since the infamous innovation was ostracised from F1, sparks of motorsport genius were celebrated across the event with anniversaries galore honouring BMW and Ferrari, as well as the much-revered Group C and Group B eras.

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An iconic combination: Mansell and the Williams FW14B were reunited

MANSELL REKINDLES MEMORIES AND TRIES SOMETHING DIFFERENT

The 30th anniversary of Nigel Mansell's title-winning campaign was a focal point of the 2022 event, and his reuniting with the Williams FW14B drew a rapturous reception.

While Mansell was clearly moved by driving 'Red 5' for the first time since Adelaide 1992, he also relived his *Il Leone* days, getting reacquainted with two of his former Ferraris during the weekend.

But it was the opportunity to drive Jim Clark's Lotus 25 that Mansell really revelled in. "It's been breathtaking… all my preconceived ideas of what the car would be like were blown away," said the 68-year-old. "It was sensational, they should bring those cars back!"

Ever a man keen to attribute his greatest drives to the support of fans, an emotional Mansell admitted driving his FW14B in front of an adoring crowd brought back fond memories: "I'm trying not to well up. I feel like I've just won a race!"

MICHAEL HAFFENDEN

Mansell was impressed by ex-Clark Lotus

JEP

RAINEY MAKES HIS EMOTIONAL RETURN

There's never a shortage of two-wheeled talents at the Festival of Speed, but this year especially had an unmissable feel surrounding one particular star making a return to the saddle: Wayne Rainey.

Acclaimed for his smooth, calculated riding style, Rainey won three consecutive championships in the premier class from 1990 to 1992, and was battling rival Kevin Schwantz for the 1993 title when he suffered a career-ending crash while leading at Misano that left him paralysed from the chest down.

Rainey's return to riding understandably prompted a visceral reaction from misty-eyed fans, with hand controls enabling his first ride on his title-winning Yamaha YZR500 from 1992 for 30 years, and his first on a grand prix bike since that fateful Misano race 29 years ago.

JEP

An inspirational story in its own right, in typical Goodwood fashion this became an unforgettable highlight of the event as Rainey was joined on his runs up the hill (right) by Mick Doohan and Schwantz, as well as fellow racer and team boss Kenny Roberts. "I never thought after 30 years that I would be back on this bike, with my competitors and rivals that I battled so hard," said the 61-year-old. "Being in this setting, it's like we're all buddies now, it's really amazing."

Rainey admitted his opening runs up the hill were important exercises in gaining confidence, which was visibly achieved come Saturday as he left plumes of evocative two-stroke smoke while blasting up the hill with ever-growing assurance.

"The first couple of times, it was very gingerly, and I was not sure where the track went, not sure about the balance," he explained. "It's a 500cc two-stroke, I haven't ridden in a long time so you have to be very careful with it. Now that I've been up the hill five or six times I believe, that last run today was the first wheelie I've done in 30 years!"

Rainey also explained the poignance of having his close family with him to witness a landmark moment: "When I was injured my son was 10 months old, now he's lifting me onto the bike!

"That is so special to me that he can finally experience what I did throughout my career."

MICHAEL HAFFENDEN

JEP

FERRARI HEADS THE ANNIVERSARY PARADES

The 2022 Festival of Speed was awash with anniversaries, as 50 years of BMW M took centre stage with cars from past, present and future suspended on a typically spectacular Gerry Judah sculpture outside Goodwood House.

Thirty years on from Nigel Mansell's and Wayne Rainey's title-winning seasons at the pinnacle of four and two-wheeled motorsport, an array of Group B rally cars also celebrated an ill-fated but much adored earlier era.

But it was Goodwood's salute to Ferrari that stole the show on the hillclimb, aptly honouring 75 years of the famous marque with over 30 cars from its origins right through to its latest GT.

Standout drivers included Marino Franchitti behind the wheel of a 512S, Derek Bell in a 365 GTB/4, Marc Gene in the 2009 F60 grand prix car and Mansell driving the rare 639 F1 test car (right) from 1989, while Sam Hancock hurled a stunning 246S Dino up the hill during the shootout runs.

JEP

Bell was also in action in his Le Mans-winning Porsche 956 as celebrations harked back to the start of the legendary Group C period during which he and Porsche achieved such success. More than a dozen cars comprised this batch, with Porsche, Lancia, Jaguar, Mercedes, Aston Martin, Nissan and Ford all represented. Henri Pescarolo and Emanuele Pirro added to the Le Mans legends list, while experienced sportscar racer Alex Brundle enjoyed a brief taste of a different age during his run in a 1989 Sauber-Mercedes C9.

Bell noted the significance of his 956 that brought Porsche a memorable 1-2-3 at Le Mans in 1982, with the ground-effects technology that made the car such a dramatic step forward having real relevance in top-tier motorsport today. "This is the car that they actually put in a museum upside down stuck to the ceiling, to show that at 236mph it would stick to the ceiling," he said. "I mean, it's the most amazing car because of what Porsche did back then with ground-effects.

"The strange thing is, it's so relevant what we see right here, they've just gone to that in F1. They've had all this instability last year, and couldn't get close… now they can get much closer."

MICHAEL HAFFENDEN

JEP

SUPERVAN BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

Ford returned to the theme of the Supervan at Goodwood. The previous three iterations of race-bred Transit demonstrator built over the past 50 years were powered by V8s – a GT40 powerplant, a Cosworth DFL endurance unit and then an HB Formula 1 engine – yet the latest in the line doesn't use a drop of petrol, and has at least three times the power of any of them!

SuperVan 4 – note the big V this time – pushes out nearly 2000bhp from its four electric motors. That explains how Romain Dumas was able to post sixth fastest time in the Sunday shootout aboard a machine weighing in at two tonnes.

The first Transit *leviath-van* since the Cosworth HB-engined design debuted in 1994 was conceived and built in the 11 and a bit months since last year's Festival of Speed. Ford CEO Jim Farley took the Mustang Mach-E 1400 electric-vehicle prototype up the hill, and then asked what next? "Jim knew all about Supervan," said Mark Rushbrook, who has overseen the project in his role of director of Ford Performance. "He's a genuine motorsport enthusiast. People are well aware of Supervan at Ford in Detroit, so we said let's do an electric Supervan."

The project has been masterminded in Austria by former rally driver Manfred Stohl's STARD organisation, which was also responsible for the Fiesta ERX electric rallycross racer. Unlike the second and third Supervans developed out of the unraced Mk3 Ford C100 Group C design from the pen of Tony Southgate, the fourth version incorporates elements of a real Transit chassis just like the original built by Terry Drury Racing. It's built up from the floorpan of the E-Transit that went on sale this year and the 50kW/h battery attaches to the standard mounting points.

Ford says it has big plans for SuperVan 4, which was given a quick shakedown at the Dunsfold aerodrome ahead of the FoS. The machine can run in three modes at present, track, drag and road, while rally and drift are planned for the future.

GARY WATKINS

JEP

BMW MOTORSPORT: FABULOUS AT 50

HAWKINS

BMW Motorsport hits 50 this year, and Goodwood helped celebrate that milestone with a plateau of machinery spanning its successes in touring cars, sportscars and single-seaters. All the boxes were ticked with a Spa 24 Hours-winning BMW M3 from 1990, the V12 LMR that triumphed at Le Mans in 1999, and Nelson Piquet's Brabham BT52 1983 Formula 1 title-winner.

GP3 and FIA Formula 3 race winner Pedro Piquet shared his father's BMW-powered grand prix racer, restored by the factory back in 2012-13, with Karun Chandhok. There was also another open-wheeler that gave a nod to an important era in BMW's racing history. The BMW-powered Formula 2 March 782, chassis #8 now owned by Matthew Watts, that Marc Surer drove as part of the marque's junior programme was taken up the hill by historic young gun Ben Mitchell.

HAWKINS

The E30-shape M3 owned and driven by Andy Chan is the car (right) that Johnny Cecotto, Fabien Giroix and Markus Oestreich pedalled to victory in the Spa enduro with the Schnitzer team 32 years ago. It remains a time warp having had an easy life after 1990: the car was sold to the Far East and was a regular in the Macau Guia race in the hands of Henry Lee Jr.

BMW legend Steve Soper got to drive two of the machines in which he saw out his long career with BMW. He had a brief go in the V12 LMR, chassis #003 that won Le Mans with Yannick Dalmas, Pierluigi Martini and Jo Winkelhock and the sister car to the chassis in which Soper won three ALMS races in the second half of 1999 with JJ Lehto. The Finn was also his team-mate in the 1997 FIA GT Championship when they were frontrunners in a Schnitzer-run McLaren F1 GTR powered by BMW's S70/2 V12. The car he drove at Goodwood was raced by Roberto Ravaglia and Peter Kox.

Two distinct versions of the BMW M1 also ran up the hill. Sam Hancock drove a Group 4 machine raced by Elio de Angelis in the colours of Denim aftershave in the Procar F1-support series. More obscure was one of two Group 5 cars built by Sauber. Adrian Gattiker brought over the sister car to the BASF-liveried machine raced by, among others, Hans Stuck.

GARY WATKINS

PORSCHE CELEBRATES THE OLD AND THE NEW

HAWKINS

Goodwood celebrated the 40th anniversary of the start of Group C, which inevitably meant a smorgasbord of Porsche 956s and 962s. Yet the star of the weekend as far as Stuttgart machinery went was a largely overlooked classic: the 936 open-top Group 6 racer that sits between the all-conquering coupes, the 917 and the 956, in the pantheon of Porsche prototypes.

It wasn't the presence of 936 #001 at Goodwood that was remarkable, nor that Jacky Ickx (left) was driving it. The Belgian great reckoned he had been back behind the wheel of the car since period, but couldn't be sure when. What is certain is that he hadn't graced its cockpit with the car in the specification that he scored what he regards as the greatest of his six Le Mans triumphs together with Hurley Haywood and Jurgen Barth back in 1977.

Goodwood was the first run for the car, save for a brief shakedown at Millbrook, after a three and a half year restoration in the UK at Maxted-Page to bring the car back to its Le Mans-winning 1977 spec. When #001 raced for the final time in Jules livery in 1981, it was powered by the Indycar-based 2.65-litre flat-six with watercooled heads rather than the original fully aircooled 2.1. That meant fabricating a new rear end for the chassis.

There was another newly restored Porsche prototype at Goodwood last week, this one the result of the efforts of the Porsche museum and heritage department. The RS Spyder LMP2 in which Timo Bernhard took to the hill links two successful Porsche prototype programmes.

Unraced chassis #701 (right), the first of the rebodied Mk2 versions of the car, was hauled out

FAN CAR TAKES RECORD AND SHOOTOUT VICTORY

JEP

JEP

The disambiguation is over. The remarkable McMurtry Automotive Speirling 'fan car' is the fastest machine ever up the 1.1-mile hillclimb route to topple both the official and unofficial records. The history books had Nick Heidfeld down as the true record holder courtesy of his famous 41.6-second run in the McLaren MP4/13 in 1999. Then in 2019, Romain Dumas posted a 39.9s effort aboard the Volkswagen I.D. R. However, that halo time was set in the Saturday qualifying session and not in the true Sunday shootout. Cue caveats and confusion.

Max Chilton has settled the debate, though. The ex-Formula 1 and IndyCar racer was welded to the road thanks to the McMurtry's fan that produces 2000kg of downforce even when at a standstill. Any leftover air was then inhaled by the spectators who gasped in unison as Chilton darted past at 149mph, leaving a trail of dust and hay.

The all-electric 1000kg single-seat closed-cockpit machine is based around the diminutive footprint of a 1960s grand prix car. That left plenty of asphalt to spare as Chilton fired between the bales and Flint Wall to stop the clock at an incredible 39.08s. Autosport urges all readers to find the replay of this amazing engineering feat.

Chilton, now 31, has been going to the event since he was four years old. He was met at the top of the hill by the Duke of Richmond and indeed both Heidfeld (whose Gen3 Formula E car broke down on its timed run) and Dumas (sixth-fastest in the 2000bhp fourth-generation Ford SuperVan).

The Brit, replaced in the car on Saturday by hillclimb specialist Alex Summers in order to attend a wedding, said: "I never thought that was going to happen. If someone had said, 'One day you're going to beat every single person that's ever gone up that hill', I wouldn't have believed you. I got one hour's sleep because I was so stressed. Pressure makes diamonds, as they say!"

6.42s decided the victory as EVs ruled the roost. Richard Lietz was second after delivering a 45.5s run in the Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 ePerformance (above, left). That left it to historic single-seater ace Ben Mitchell to best represent the internal combustion engine. He guided the ex-Marc Surer BMW-powered March 782 to third ahead of past shootout winner and crowd pleaser Justin Law in his trusty Jaguar XJR-12D.

Travis Pastrana was fourth in the wild skunkworks Subaru GL 'Family Huckster' creation (below), most notable for its dizzying array of bonnet and rear box arch-mounted airbrakes.

MATT KEW

HAWKINS

of the museum in 2013 to become a test mule for the LMP1 919 Hybrid's monoshock rear suspension. Now it's back in the form – in unpainted carbon – in which it racked up the test miles ahead of Penske's 2007 American Le Mans Series campaign.

The machine that will take Porsche back to Le Mans in pursuit of outright victory number 20 was fittingly at Goodwood, shown for the first time in the livery in which the factory cars will race with Penske in the World Endurance Championship and the IMSA SportsCar Championship from next year. The colour scheme and the name announced for the car pay tribute to Porsche's rich history: the red-and-white nose harks back to the Salzburg 917K that triumphed at the French enduro in 1970 and the type number, 963, tips its hat to the 962.

GARY WATKINS

JEP

Lightning performance for Acuras

IMSA SPORTSCAR
WATKINS GLEN (USA)
26 JUNE
ROUND 7/12

Albuquerque and Taylor got a break from storm

GALSTAD/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

The Meyer Shank Racing Acura ARX-05 of Tom Blomqvist and Oliver Jarvis seemed poised for victory in Sunday's traditional 6 Hours of Watkins Glen. But a red-flag stoppage due to lightning with 90 minutes remaining set the stage for a 21-minute shootout, and instead it was Filipe Albuquerque and Ricky Taylor who snatched away the spoils with the similar Acura of Wayne Taylor Racing.

The Acuras took charge of proceedings in qualifying on Saturday and never relinquished their stranglehold at the storied 3.4-mile venue. Blomqvist took first blood on Saturday afternoon, producing a stunning new lap record at an average speed of 136.637mph to secure his first career pole. Albuquerque's best was only 0.164s shy of the Briton, and the Portuguese used his car's slightly lower-downforce configuration to execute a bold pass for the lead on the opening lap of the race.

The first two hours were blighted by no fewer than five full-course cautions for a variety of incidents. Thankfully, the race then settled down with the next two and a half hours featuring a head-to-head battle between the two Acuras, with Sebastien Bourdais and Renger van der Zande doing their best to hang on in the first of Chip Ganassi's two Cadillac DPi-V.Rs.

The Acuras led every one of the 162 laps, with Jarvis/Blomqvist seemingly in control when the caution flags waved again due to a nasty crash for the Carbahn with Peregrine Racing GTD Lamborghini of Jeff Westphal, who was the innocent victim of a squabble between two LMP2 drivers on the downhill plunge toward Turn 7. Even before the wreckage could be cleared away, the red flags were displayed when some nearby lightning strikes triggered an immediate halt to the proceedings. Curiously, the thunderstorm passed close by with precious little precipitation, but it took almost an hour before the threat of electrical strikes had passed and the race was able to resume.

Albuquerque knew he would likely have only one opportunity to take the win. It came at the restart, when he took advantage of Blomqvist's draft on the main straight to tow alongside. Albuquerque hadn't entirely cleared his rival as he headed towards the 'Inner Loop' chicane, but he threw his car into the right-left complex anyway, making significant contact with Blomqvist as he barged past. It was hard and effective. Try as he did, a disgruntled Blomqvist had to settle for his team's fourth consecutive second-place finish by less than a second.

Bourdais/van der Zande took the flag only 1.4s further adrift, followed by team-mates Earl Bamber/Alex Lynn, who barely held off the Action Express Cadillac of Olivier Pla/Mike Conway/Pipo Derani.

Scott Huffaker took a fine LMP2 win for himself, Mikkel Jensen, Ben Keating and PR1-Mathiasen Motorsports by holding off a charging Louis Deletraz/John Farano/Rui Andrade (Tower Motorsport) by just 0.107s. Gar Robinson/Felipe Fraga/Kay van Berlo claimed the Riley Motorsports team's third straight Glen victory in LMP3.

Both GTD Pro and GTD featured tremendous battles throughout the race although, unsatisfactorily, both were ultimately decided by the red-flag stoppage causing teams not to meet the minimum drive-time requirements. BMW Team RLL (Connor De Phillippi/John Edwards/Augusto Farfus) and Winward Racing (Russell Ward/Mikael Grenier/Philip Ellis) were thus relegated to the back of their respective classes, leaving the Heart of Racing Aston Martin team to record a fortunate sweep through the efforts of Ross Gunn/Alex Riberas and Roman De Angelis/Maxime Martin/Ian James.

JEREMY SHAW

BMW (leading) lost class win to Aston Martin (right)

GALSTAD motorsport IMAGES

Cupra of Huff gives vain chase to the Audi of Magnus at Motorland Aragon

BONILLA/DPPI

Magnus fends off 'Mr Senior' Huff in Spain

WORLD TOURING CAR CUP
MOTORLAND ARAGON (ESP)
26 JUNE
ROUND 4/10

Gilles Magnus was near-perfect as he scored his second career World Touring Car Cup victory, and Rob Huff claimed a remarkable pair of second places in what he described as his best weekend in the series. But the biggest winner at Motorland Aragon was home hero Mikel Azcona. BRC Hyundai's star winter signing celebrated his 26th birthday with third in race one and a third victory from six races in the partially reversed-grid second encounter to open up a commanding lead in the standings.

Magnus proved a point in qualifying, delivering the flawless lap in the Q3 shootout he failed to find under pressure in Hungary to secure pole position. The next day, the 22-year-old turned that into Comtoyou Audi's first win of the season, despite intense race-long attention from the brilliant Huff in Zengo Motorsport's increasingly effective Cupra Leon. Huff was on the Audi's tail for every one of the 16 laps, but the RS3 LMS was slippery enough down the back straight to keep the success ballast-free Cupra at arm's length.

From fourth on the grid, Huff demoted both reigning champion Yann Ehrlacher and front-row starter Nathanael Berthon in the first three corners to latch himself on to Magnus's Audi. "This guy, 'Mr Senior' as I call him, did not make it easy," said Magnus. "He was really quick, I was not allowed to make any mistakes and then on the last lap I had a fuel cut. On the radio I was going crazy, but in the end we managed to bring it home."

Berthon was third on the road, but hours later was docked five seconds for contact with an unhappy Ehrlacher. That bumped Azcona into third from eighth, the lowly grid spot a result of BRC Squadra Corse playing tactics in the name of keeping a favourable Balance of Performance. The ploy worked, although team-mate Norbert Michelisz was also penalised for contact with Ehrlacher, dropping him to sixth and promoting the double champ to fifth.

BRC's weekend was topped off by Azcona's fine victory in race two. From third on the partially reversed grid, he watched Michelisz take the lead from polesitter Ma Qing Hua, only for the Hungarian to crash heavily into a tyre stack. Tom Coronel's Audi was also in the wars, so the safety car was called upon.

From the restart, Ma lost the lead to Zengo's Daniel Nagy, before Azcona passed both within two laps. Huff gave him something to think about after Nagy allowed his team-mate through to attack for the win, but the 2012 World Touring Car champion was more than happy with his third successive WTCR runner-up spot.

Suddenly Azcona has a healthy 34-point lead in the standings over Magnus, with Huff and Santi Urrutia — the other podium finisher in race two — tied for third. Early-season points leader Nestor Girolami had a weekend to forget, as did the other three Hondas running with full ballast. Girolami could finish only 12th in both races for Munnich Motorsport.

DAMIEN SMITH

WEEKEND WINNERS

IMSA SPORTSCAR
WATKINS GLEN (USA)

DPi	Ricky Taylor/Filipe Albuquerque Wayne Taylor Racing (Acura ARX-05)
LMP2	Mikkel Jensen/Scott Huffaker/ Ben Keating PR1/Mathiasen M'sports (ORECA 07)
LMP3	Felipe Fraga/Kay van Berlo/ Gar Robinson Riley Motorsports (Ligier JSP320)
GTD Pro	Ross Gunn/Alex Riberas Heart of Racing Team (Aston Martin Vantage GT3)
GTD	Maxime Martin/Roman De Angelis/ Ian James Heart of Racing Team (Aston Martin Vantage GT3)

WORLD TOURING CAR CUP
MOTORLAND ARAGON (ESP)

Race 1	Gilles Magnus Comtoyou Racing (Audi RS3 LMS TCR)
Race 2	Mikel Azcona BRC Racing Team (Hyundai Elantra N TCR)

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Azcona is banking a wall of points at the moment

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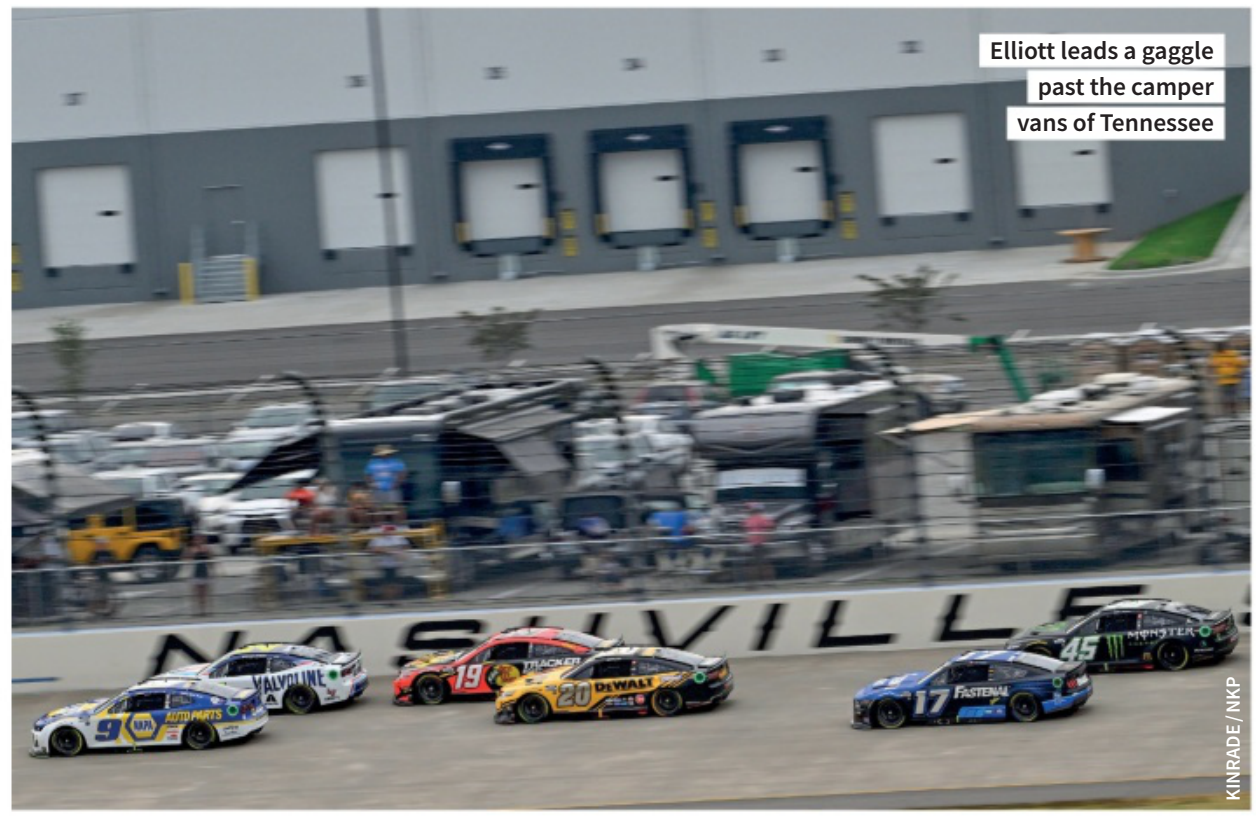
Elliott makes his title charge more concrete

NASCAR CUP
NASHVILLE (USA)
26 JUNE
ROUND 17/36


Elliott leads a gaggle past the camper vans of Tennessee
KINRADE/NKP

Most of Chase Elliott's NASCAR Cup Series victories have come on road courses, but it's on concrete ovals where he's scored his two wins this season. With a push from Ryan Blaney on a restart with four laps to go, Elliott cleared Kurt Busch and held him off by 0.551 seconds to win at Nashville.

The 300-lap race took nearly seven hours to complete because it was delayed twice for a total of more than three hours due to rain and persistent lightning strikes nearby. The win is Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet driver Elliott's second of the 2022 season, following his triumph at Dover, and was the 15th of his career.

"I figured [the last caution] was coming but I was hoping not," said Elliott. "Ryan gave me a great shove. I appreciate him getting us out front. We had a setback there about halfway [he had to pit twice under caution for a loose wheel]. But we were able to get our Chevy dialled back in and get back in the mix. It was a long day, a fun day."

After the race, Busch second-guessed his approach to the last restart. "I got soft on him," he said of Elliott. "I should have been throwing some fenders and moving some momentum around."

A late caution set up a pit strategy decision, and several of those who had been in contention for the win elected to pit for new tyres while Elliott and nine others remained on the track. That spoiled what had been a tremendous race for the Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota drivers, who led 250 of the 300 laps. Denny Hamlin led the most with 114 but finished sixth.

Behind Busch's 23XI Toyota, Blaney finished third in his Penske Ford from Kyle Larson (Hendrick Chevy) and Ross Chastain (TrackHouse Chevy).

JIM UTTER

Aitken steers Lambo to win

ADAC GT MASTERS
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
25-26 JUNE
ROUND 3/7

Jack Aitken claimed his first win in Germany's ADAC GT Masters series when he combined with Lamborghini star and fellow ex-Formula Renault Eurocup champion Albert Costa to take victory at Zandvoort.

Aitken put the Emil Frey Racing Huracan GT3 Evo on pole, and led throughout the first stint. He then handed over to Costa, and similarly the Spaniard made no mistakes to complete a comfortable win for the pair. They were followed home by the Car Collection Audi of Thierry Vermeulen, whose father Raymond manages Max Verstappen and who had taken the car over from Mattia Drudi. Christian Engelhart was on course for third place, which would have given him and Ayhancan Guven the series lead, when their Team Joos Porsche slowed within sight of the flag and dropped to eighth. Franck Perera and Arthur Rougier therefore made it two EFR Lambo crews on the podium by inheriting third.

Costa completes job for Lambo victory
GRUPPE C GMBH/ADAC MOTORSPORT

Another car from Emil Frey's Lambo stable had won on Saturday. Drizzly conditions made it tough with the cars on slicks, but Mick Wishofer led from pole and Konsta Lappalainen completed the job by taking the victory. They were followed by the Audis of Dennis Marshall/Kim-Luis Schramm and Norbert Siedler/Simon Reicher.

Costa and Aitken were 12th in this race, while double Red Bull Ring winners Ben Green and Niklas Krutten took a best result of 11th over the weekend with their Schubert Motorsport BMW.

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WEEKEND WINNERS

NASCAR CUP
NASHVILLE (USA)
Chase Elliott
Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet Camaro)

ADAC GT
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
Race 1 Konsta Lappalainen/Mick Wishofer
Emil Frey Racing
(Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo)
Race 2 Jack Aitken/Albert Costa
Emil Frey Racing
(Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo)

NLS
NURBURGRING (DEU)
Rene Rast/Kuba Giermaziak (below)
Team Phoenix (Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II)

BRUCKE/VLN

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Espargaro stars, Quartararo falls, Bagnaia wins

ALL PICS: GOLD AND GOOSE

Espargaro goes off as Quartararo goes down…

…and there would be no points for the title favourite

MOTOGP
ASSEN (NLD)
26 JUNE
ROUND 11/20

Just when the 2022 MotoGP world championship battle looked as if it was entering a predictable phase following dominant back-to-back wins for Fabio Quartararo, the Dutch Grand Prix at Assen threw a major curveball that showed the Yamaha rider is not infallible.

The race looked like it would go to type: Francesco Bagnaia showed that Ducati's one-lap speed remained impeccable when he stormed to pole, but likely top honours were going to be shared between Quartararo and Aprilia's Aleix Espargaro.

After second-fastest qualifier Quartararo made a mistake at Turn 1 off the line and dropped to fourth behind Espargaro and the Pramac Ducati of Jorge Martin, the 2022 leading men engaged in a brief tussle. Quartararo disposed of Martin at Turn 3 before attempting the same on Espargaro at Turn 5. The Aprilia rider put up a much firmer resistance and seized second back into Turn 6 at the end of the short back straight. Quartararo shadowed Espargaro for the next three laps before attempting another move at Turn 5. Quartararo jammed his Yamaha up the inside, using his confidence in the front end of the M1. But a "rookie mistake" spelled the end of his golden run and opened the door for Espargaro.

The latter fact didn't appear immediately obvious, since Quartararo's crash forced Espargaro onto the gravel. The Aprilia rider was 8.6 seconds behind the leader at the end of lap five of 26, but come the flag he was just 2.6s from the win.

Quartararo, who has been given a long-lap penalty for August's British GP, came into the pitlane on lap nine and was subsequently sent back out by his team, which felt rain could offer them an opportunity for redemption. But he crashed for a second time exiting Turn 5 due to a broken traction control sensor on lap 12.

Meanwhile, his title rival Espargaro was battling through the pack. After 16 laps, Espargaro was up to eighth and he closed right in on the group of riders ahead as light rain appeared briefly on lap 17. Admittedly riding with "nothing to lose", Espargaro's resurgence was all down to his superior pace; for much of the race after his off he was 0.4s-0.6s quicker than anyone else.

Under normal circumstances he should have won at Assen. Instead, he finished one place higher than he started, taking the flag fourth after executing a daring double pass on Brad Binder and Jack Miller at the final chicane. If there were any doubts of how legitimate Espargaro's title aspirations are, they were silenced at Assen. Quartararo's error may have cost the Aprilia rider victory, but it has led to a 13-point swing in the standings and a gap of just 21 heading to Silverstone in August.

At the front, Bagnaia wrestled himself as the rain threat and hard-charging VR46 rookie Marco Bezzecchi behind made him "terrified" of a third successive DNF. But

Poleman Bagnaia leads at the start on his way to third win of 2022

Bagnaia celebrates leading every lap for Ducati

Redemption for Vinales with Aprilia podium

Bezzecchi's pressure wasn't enough to break Bagnaia out of his march to a third win of 2022 to reduce his points deficit to Quartararo from 91 to 66.

Assen bore witness to the great Valentino Rossi's final MotoGP win in 2017, and has seen the origins of his newest star as Bezzecchi claimed second for his and the VR46 team's first podium. And the Assen crowd saw the conclusion of a redemption arc that began one year ago at the same venue for the rider in third. Maverick Vinales quit Yamaha just 24 hours after standing on the podium at the Dutch GP in 2021, and last weekend he made his first rostrum appearance with Aprilia and finally looks like he's figured out the RS-GP. That it happened on a day when no Yamaha rider scored a single point will only add to the sweet vindication for Vinales and Aprilia.

Binder elbowed his way to fifth ahead of Miller after getting caught out by Espargaro's last-corner lunge, while Martin faded to seventh and goes into the summer break still not sure which Ducati team he will be riding for in 2023. But, with Enea Bastianini yet to score a top five since his Le Mans win in mid-May, Martin's factory seat claims are now looking much stronger.

LEWIS DUNCAN

NEXT REPORT

SILVERSTONE GP 11 AUGUST ISSUE

POWERED BY motorsport STATS

RESULTS ROUND 11/20, ASSEN (NLD), 26 JUNE (26 LAPS – 73.379 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	**Francesco Bagnaia** (ITA)	Ducati	40m25.205s
2	**Marco Bezzecchi** (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+0.444s
3	**Maverick Vinales** (ESP)	Aprilia	+1.209s
4	**Aleix Espargaro** (ESP)	Aprilia	+2.585s
5	**Brad Binder** (ZAF)	KTM	+2.721s
6	**Jack Miller** (AUS)	Ducati	+3.045s
7	**Jorge Martin** (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+4.340s
8	**Joan Mir** (ESP)	Suzuki	+8.185s
9	**Miguel Oliveira** (PRT)	KTM	+8.325s
10	**Alex Rins** (ESP)	Suzuki	+8.596s
11	**Enea Bastianini** (ITA)	Gresini Ducati	+9.783s
12	**Takaaki Nakagami** (JPN)	LCR Honda	+10.617s
13	**Johann Zarco** (FRA)	Pramac Ducati	+14.405s
14	**Fabio Di Giannantonio** (ITA)	Gresini Ducati	+17.681s
15	**Alex Marquez** (ESP)	LCR Honda	+25.866s
16	**Andrea Dovizioso** (ITA)	RNF Yamaha	+29.711s
17	**Luca Marini** (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+30.296s
18	**Stefan Bradl** (DEU)	Honda	+32.225s
19	**Remy Gardner** (AUS)	Tech3 KTM	+34.947s
20	**Lorenzo Savadori** (ITA)	Aprilia	+35.798s
R	**Raul Fernandez** (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	18 laps-arm pump
R	**Fabio Quartararo** (FRA)	Yamaha	11 laps-accident
R	**Darryn Binder** (ZAF)	RNF Yamaha	8 laps-accident
R	**Franco Morbidelli** (ITA)	Yamaha	8 laps-accident
NS	**Pol Espargaro** (ESP)	Honda	injury

Winner's average speed 108.924mph. **Fastest lap** **A Espargaro** 1m32.500s, 109.839mph.

QUALIFYING 2 **1 Bagnaia 1m31.504s**; 2 **Quartararo** 1m31.620s; 3 **Martin** 1m31.708s; 4 **Bezzecchi** 1m31.796s; 5 **A Espargaro** 1m31.868s; 6 **Miller** 1m32.124s; 7 **Zarco** 1m32.175s; 8 **Oliveira** 1m32.272s; 9 **Rins** 1m32.307s; 10 **B Binder** 1m32.367s; 11 **Vinales** 1m32.424s; 12 **Nakagami** 1m32.967s.

QUALIFYING 1 **B Binder 1m32.485s**; **Oliveira** 1m32.550s; 13 **Marini** 1m32.787s; 14 **Mir** 1m32.898s; 15 **Di Giannantonio** 1m32.912s; 16 **Bastianini** 1m33.005s; 17 **Dovizioso** 1m33.009s; 18 **Bradl** 1m33.029s; 19 **Gardner** 1m33.093s; 20 **Morbidelli** 1m33.096s; 21 **Marquez** 1m33.113s; 22 **Savadori** 1m33.467s; 23 **Fernandez** 1m33.652s; 24 **D Binder** 1m33.998s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Quartararo 172**; 2 **A Espargaro** 151; 3 **Zarco** 114; 4 **Bagnaia** 106; 5 **Bastianini** 105; 6 **B Binder** 93; 7 **Miller** 91; 8 **Mir** 77; 9 **Rins** 75; 10 **Oliveira** 71; 11 **Martin** 70; 12 **Vinales** 62; 13 **Marc Marquez** 60; 14 **Bezzecchi** 55; 15 **Marini** 52; 16 **Nakagami** 42; 17 **P Espargaro** 40; 18 **A Marquez** 27; 19 **Morbidelli** 25; 20 **Di Giannantonio** 18; 21 **D Binder** 10; 22 **Dovizioso** 10; 23 **Gardner** 9; 24 **Fernandez** 5; 25 **Bradl** 0; 26 **Michele Pirro** 0; 27 **Savadori** 0.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Ducati 246**; 2 **Yamaha** 172; 3 **Aprilia** 155; 4 **KTM** 121; 5 **Suzuki** 101; 6 **Honda** 85.

Bezzecchi took landmark podium for the VR46 team

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2
ASSEN (NLD)
Augusto Fernandez
Ajo Motorsport (Kalex)

MOTO3
ASSEN (NLD)
Ayumu Sasaki (below)
Husqvarna Max (Husqvarna)

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- To be acutely aware of the need for accuracy and resilience in a fast paced and highly pressurised environment
- To work as an effective team member in relation to the Engineering team and as required with other Pirelli motorsport teams
- To take initiative and solve problems through statistical analysis and regular liaison and discussion with colleagues, line managers and race team representatives
- To identify and undertake training and development activities as required to enable you to fulfil the role, keep your knowledge and skills up to date and to fulfil your own potential
- To undertake any other activities commensurate with the role to ensure the success of Pirelli Motorsport
- You will possess a relevant industry related degree and have a minimum of 3 years' experience within a Motorsport environment.
- You will be prepared to undertake substantial worldwide travel and will hold a current British passport.

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- Work with colleagues and members to communicate and deliver the policy aims of the organisation as part of a structured process
- Provide strategic reactive communications
- Improve internal member and employee facing communications
- Drive targeted growth through new media channels prioritizing analytics and brand awareness
- Represent FIA Member's interests at a global level with key stakeholders
- Provide counsel and briefing support to senior FIA officials
- Enhance the lobbying capabilities of the Federation with industry, governments, and international bodies
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PalmerSport

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Duties will include:

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- Assembling electronic and electrical components on high performance & race vehicles as well as any trackside equipment with which it interfaces
- Implementing and managing routine reliability and test procedures for both our GB3 & 4 and Palmersport performance vehicles
- Being responsible for the development, planning & integration of electronic and electrical components within our race & performance vehicles
- Joining the early stages of developments / projects for vehicle and circuit-based systems with a view to ensuring that electronic, electrical and comms considerations are addressed, and then to plan for their timely execution within budgets
- Liaising with sub-contractors and suppliers from the beginning of projects to ensure that the company's best interests are met and supply is timely

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- Professional behavior towards clients / colleagues.
- Ability to work under pressure.
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General responsibilities:

- Promote teamwork and effective communications to Implement strategy and practices to ensure best value and appropriate quality of supply of all goods and services procured by Haas F1 Team.
- Manage department personnel from recruitment, onboarding, employee engagement through to separation.
- Mentor, train and guide personnel as required. Develop staff using effective performance reviews and development plans.
- Promote teamwork and effective communications to develop working relationships between all personnel and departments.
- Responsible for establishing standard operating procedures and budgets to maintain a practical yet functional department.
- Other duties as assigned by the Team Principal.

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- Responsible for the management of the assigned programme(s) and project(s) in line with the F1 Project Management Process Framework
- Manage the resources (Internal and external) assigned to the programme – Define Team Roles and Responsibilities
- Own and proactively manage the budgets and business cases
- Identify and Manage all key stakeholders during the lifecycle of the programme
- Manage Risks and Issues (identification / prioritization / mitigation and escalation) in line with the requirements of the Programme Management Office

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- Research and use appropriate technologies continuously innovate and develop our models and simulation further, while pragmatically meeting the engineering requirements of the Team
- Interact internally and directly with other groups within the Team to provide solutions supporting objective technical decision making
- Ensure the on-going quality and correlation of the simulations against track and rig data to maintain the validity of the simulation results

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Project Co-Ordinator / Graduate Project Engineer
KW Special Projects

Applicants will preferably have:

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- Evidence of client-facing experience
- Experience with supplier negotiation
- Create and manage project plans
- Ability to prepare specifications and deliver these within budget and on time
- Experience in drawing office procedures and ability to implement as business and project requirement develops
- Scheme and release components using - Carbon composite, metallic machining, fabrication, and additive manufacturing DFM
- Creation of engineering documentation including GDT
- Create and control engineering BOM
- Adhere to Engineering change process control
- Manage technical risks
- Express a commitment to quality and meeting customer requirements

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British GT Ex-Formula E driver Eriksson makes debut

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RAM domination in British GT

Loggie extends points lead after Snetterton double-header

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KING REIGNS SUPREME IN MINIS AT CROFT

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Team Dolan factory gutted by fire, six FF1600 cars destroyed

FORMULA FORD 1600

Van Diemen used by Murray among those lost in the fire

JEP

Renowned Formula Ford 1600 outfit Team Dolan has had its factory completely destroyed by a fire, losing six cars in the process.

Bernard Dolan's team has become a mainstay of the FF1600 paddock, taking back-to-back National Formula Ford titles in 2018 and 2019 with Niall Murray and Ross Martin, as well as last year's crown with Chris Middlehurst.

The team and its three current drivers, Morgan Quinn, Gabe Tesch and Ben Cochran, were racing at Anglesey across the 18-19 June weekend when news of the fire outside Ipswich reached Dolan on Sunday evening.

"Basically the fire took place in another unit next to my unit," said the ex-Reynard works driver (right). "No one got hurt or died, but it's a funny feeling, it feels like someone has died. At the moment we're going through all the different legal things as it was mine and three other units. [The cost for it all] is into the millions."

Dolan added "we haven't been able to put a value" on everything that was destroyed in his unit, which includes the Van Diemen used by Murray to win the Formula Ford Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy in 2016. Another car owned by Dolan and four customer cars were also lost, as well as spares and equipment.

"There's certainly cars that have fairly big histories, that's going to be hard to swallow," said Dolan. "Two cars were my cars, which would have been out for the end of the year for the big trophy races."

Dolan insists the team will still carry on with the National FF1600 season with the three cars that were in Anglesey at the time, but that "we're looking in a lot of different directions" regarding the future of the squad.

"A lot of people were being very supportive straight away and I already had the offer of one car, which is great," he added. "I won't put it out there that we're looking for stuff as, at the moment, I've got to get my head around dealing with the insurance.

"It's a challenge and we've got to try and bounce back as quick as we can. It will probably take a couple of years to get back to where we were. I sometimes keep thinking it's a dream but it's not, it's reality."

STEFAN MACKLEY

Walker walks away from Elite

GB4

Title contender Alex Walker withdrew from last weekend's GB4 Championship round at Snetterton after parting company with the Elite Motorsport team.

Walker won three races across the opening two events of the season with Elite to gain an early lead in the championship, but incident-filled weekends at Silverstone and Donington Park in May meant he had slipped to third in the standings.

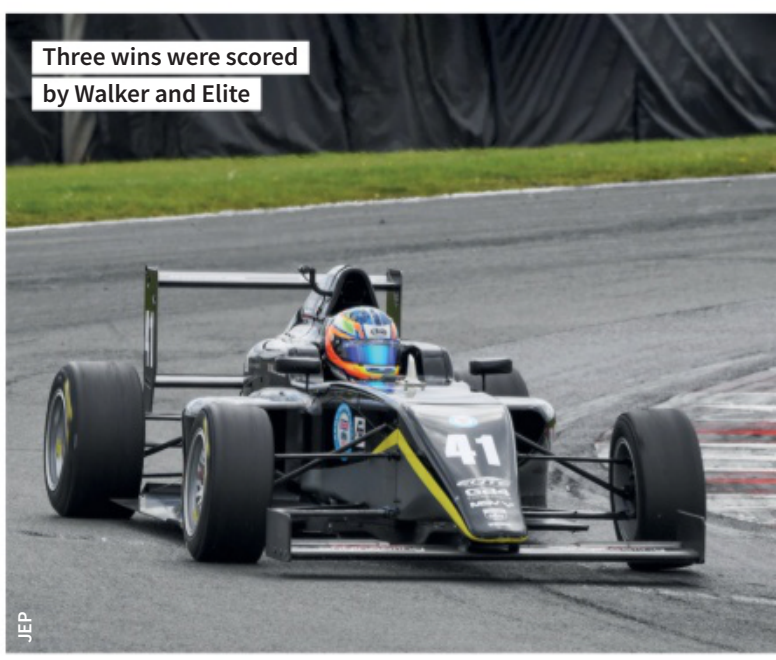
After deciding to leave the team, the ex-Formula Ford racer still took part in Friday's pre-event testing as a privateer, but then withdrew before qualifying on Saturday.

Walker was unavailable for comment, and it is unclear whether he will take part in the final three rounds of the season.

Elite's team principal Eddie Ives revealed it had been Walker's decision to stop racing.

"I don't really understand it," he said. "I'm not going to persuade someone to carry on doing it if their heart's not in it, and that's what it got to."

STEVE WHITFIELD


Three wins were scored by Walker and Elite

JEP

Former DTM driver Eriksson joins British GT

Eriksson had already been coaching Chen in British GT

BRITISH GT

Former DTM and Formula E driver Joel Eriksson made his British GT debut last weekend at Snetterton. The Swede replaced Angus Fender at Century Motorsport aboard the team's BMW M4 GT3, and partnered Betty Chen for the two one-hour races in Norfolk.

Eriksson competed part-time with Dragon Penske Autosport in Formula E last season, taking a best result of 10th, and previously spent two years in the DTM with BMW, during which he achieved one win.

The 24-year-old had already attended each round of British GT this season as a driver coach to Chen, who he previously raced with in Asian GTs, and will continue as her co-driver for the remaining three rounds following budget issues for Fender.

The pairing qualified a best of 15th for the two races, with Eriksson only getting his first experience of the BMW GT3 and the Snetterton circuit in pre-event testing.

"It's my first time around here on this track — UK tracks are quite narrow and I found it quite difficult in the beginning," he said. "We're improving session by session but qualifying was not great as we had some issues with the car. Other teams made a big step forward since FP2 but we stayed on the same level."

The duo finished 14th in the opening race, but were classified 29th in race two after losing time in the pits with a diffuser issue. "It was quite difficult because it's a hard track for the tyres," said Eriksson. "The high-speed corners are taking a lot out of the tyres, but we're making some good progress."

Team boss Nathan Freke added: "We've been hit with a Balance of Performance [tweak]; I guess the car globally has been quite successful."

STEFAN MACKLEY

Davidson makes British GT return with Paddock

Clashing commitments for Fletcher meant Davidson was drafted in

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

BRITISH GT

Graham Davidson returned to British GT last weekend at Snetterton, sharing the Paddock Motorsport McLaren 720S alongside Martin Plowman.

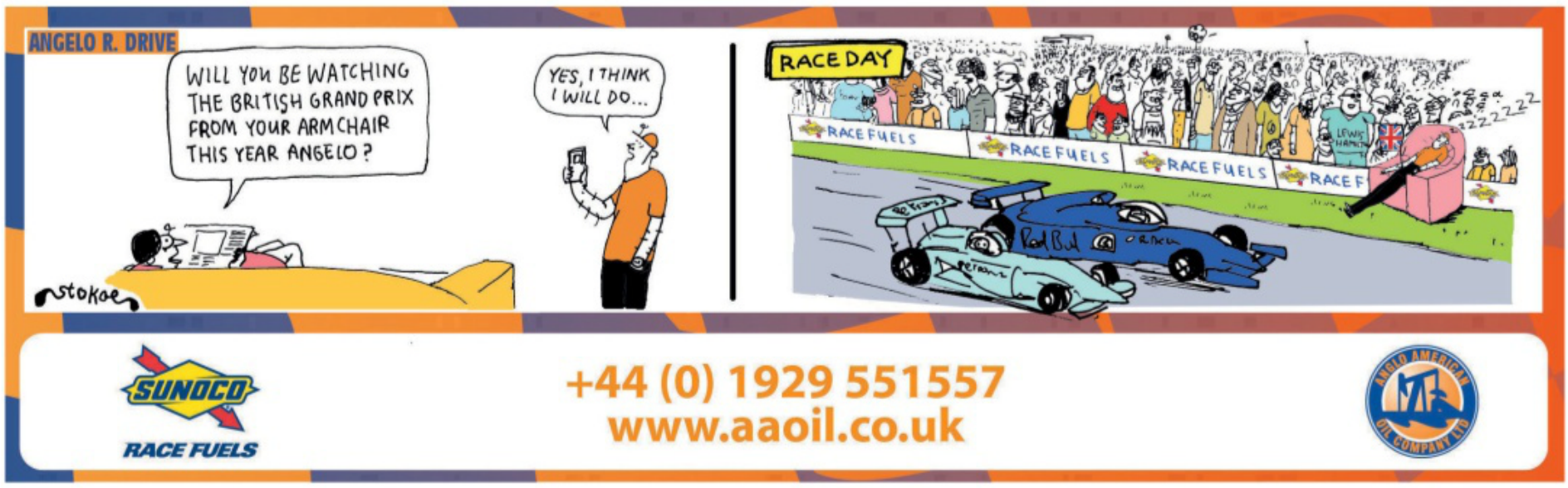
The Scot, who was 2019 GT3 champion alongside Jonny Adam in a TF Sport-run Aston Martin, made his second appearance in the category this season after competing in the opening round at Oulton Park with Team Rocket RJN. He was called in to replace Kelvin Fletcher due to clashing commitments for the actor, and will also contest the next round at Spa.

"We started talking at Oulton Park — they phoned me after and said Kelvin had commitments and that they had to take priority," said Davidson. "They came back to me and decided I would do this round and Spa. It's nice to be back out."

The pair claimed 15th in race one after stopping prior to the pit window opening to replace a punctured tyre, and finished the sequel in the same position.

Plowman added: "It's a massive honour having Graham in the car. He's very talented. The data between us is what you would expect between a Pro and an Am. He's done an incredible job."

STEFAN MACKLEY



Williams to be celebrated at The Classic

SILVERSTONE CLASSIC

This year's Silverstone Classic will pay tribute to legendary Formula 1 team boss Sir Frank Williams, who died at the end of last year.

The Historic F1 races forming part of the three-day motorsport extravaganza will be renamed The Frank Williams Memorial Trophy for Masters Racing Legends in his honour. Williams Heritage is also loaning an FW07 to go on display in the paddock as part of the celebrations of Williams's extraordinary life.

The Silverstone circuit holds a special significance in Williams's story – it was where his team took its first pole and win in 1979.

In a statement, the Williams family said: "For so many reasons Silverstone was very, very special to our father and thus we, as a family, welcome the very fitting celebrations of Dad's extraordinary life being planned at The Classic this summer.

Historic F1 races will be named after Williams
JEP

"As we all know, Dad was always an out-and-out racer and that was the driving force which stirred his soul throughout the good and less good times. Memories of him at Silverstone always epitomise both his spirit and the unwavering passion he had for F1 and, we're sure, a little bit of that passion will now live on at The Classic."

Newey set to join Le Mans Classic action in Jaguar D-type

HISTORICS

Ex-European Formula 3 and DTM racer Harrison Newey, son of Red Bull technical guru Adrian, is due to make his historic racing debut at this week's Le Mans Classic.

Newey Jr tested his Pearson-prepared Jaguar D-type for the first time at Donington Park recently. And although he had some laps at the Le Mans 24 Hours practice as reserve driver for the Penske team, there will be no more testing before the Classic event.

"I did about 15 laps in the morning at Donington, so that's it, testing done, but I thoroughly enjoyed it and am now looking forward to my first race since DTM," said Newey, who added of the D-type that "you can't help thinking how much it's worth when you're driving it".

Aside from the DTM, Newey did make an appearance in the 116 Trophy at Brands Hatch last year, but an early puncture hampered his charge.

PETER SCHERER

Former DTM racer tested D-type at Donington last week
PETER SCHERER

IN THE HEADLINES

SMELT IN SPRINT CHALLENGE

Former British Touring Car and British GT racer Sam Smelt made his Porsche Sprint Challenge GB debut when the series joined the BTCC bill at Croft last weekend. Smelt finished fourth in each of the Cayman contests for the Redline Racing squad, narrowly keeping Matt Greenwood and Harry Foster at bay in the respective races.

COATES'S MINI FRUSTRATION

Max Coates endured a frustrating Mini Challenge Trophy debut at his local circuit of Croft last weekend. The Mini regular swapped his Graves Motorsport JCW for one of the team's Cooper class cars but could only manage a best result of 14th from the two Yorkshire races as he battled a lack of straightline speed.

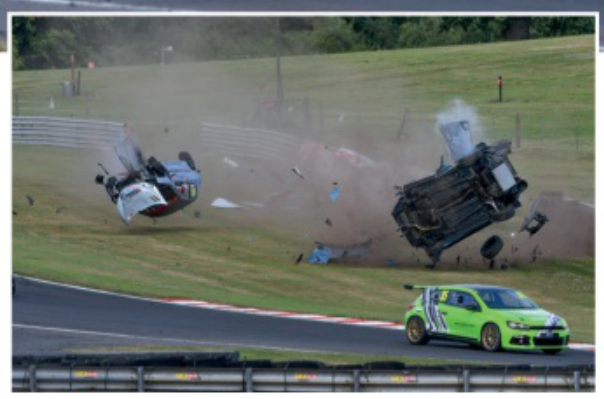
MARC VALVEKENS 1947-2022

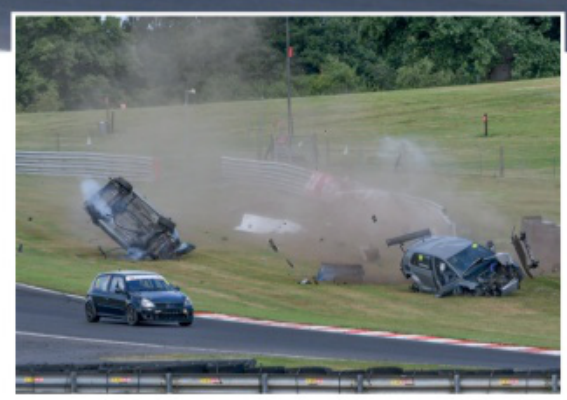
The historic racing world lost one of its most charismatic competitors last week when Marc Valvekens succumbed to cancer, aged 75. The Belgian lawyer, a stalwart Historic Grand Prix Cars Association member, competed as far afield as Phillip Island in Australia but was best known in Britain for finishing second and third at Goodwood in 2015 and 2016, driving Aston Martin DBR4/4 (Hawthorn Trophy) and Gordini T16 (Parnell Cup) respectively. Valvekens always drove with aplomb, but it was his enjoyment of the cars and his social presence that endeared him to those who competed with him.

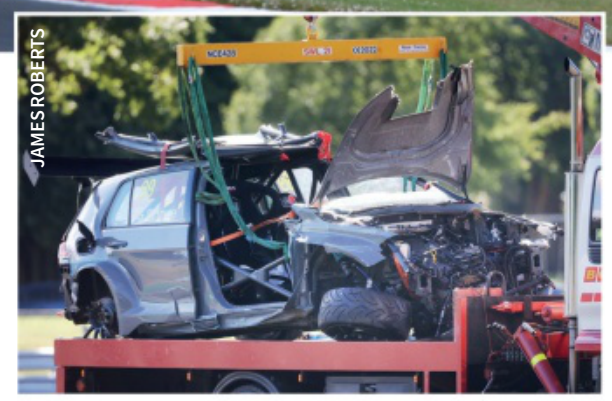
LIVESEY'S LOLA BACK OUT

Simon Hadfield gave Paul Livesey's BOSS GP-bound Lola B02/50 (below) a shakedown at Donington Park last week, following a lengthy rebuild. Former Classic Sports and Group C racer Livesey will also be returning to competition after a spell away. "I bought the car 10 years ago, but it's been a long rebuild," he said. "It had previously done hillclimbs in France and I did about six laps in it at Donington about six years ago."

PETER SCHERER







LUCKY OULTON ESCAPE FOR TRACK ATTACK RACERS

Track Attack racers Geoff Prince and Kevin Matkin were fortunate to escape serious injury in this frightening crash at Oulton Park last Saturday. Prince's Volkswagen Golf was lapping Matkin's Peugeot 206 along The Avenue when the pair made contact and both went hard into the barriers, pitching each car into a roll. Matkin was able to walk away with just bumps and bruises, while Prince was cut out of his car and taken to Stoke hospital by road. He has since been released and suffered five broken ribs and a broken hand, testament to the strength of his newly built JM Racing Mk7 (inset). **Photographs by Steve Jones**

Heavy Croft crash in F4 for Pearson

BRITISH F4

British Formula 4 driver Joel Pearson was another to escape major injury last weekend after a heavy crash at Croft.

The Chris Dittmann Racing driver was caught out when a car ahead braked slightly earlier than normal at Tower. Pearson reacted to avoid a collision, went off and instead had a hard impact with the barriers.

The race was red-flagged and Pearson taken to the medical centre with a suspected broken finger. "I'm a bit battered and bruised from the impact, and I'll be sore for a while, but I'm OK," said Pearson. "I just need to work on my recovery before we head to Knockhill."

Team boss Dittmann added: "It was a racing incident; he had a good run on the back straight into Tower when the driver in front braked slightly early and caught him out. There was no malice, but the result was quite a sizeable accident. It's a definite testament to the safety of the car that he is OK."

British F4 now heads into its summer break with the next round at Knockhill not until the end of July, leaving Pearson time to recover and the team a chance to repair his car.

Hot Hatch attracts large entries, but last meeting proved to be chaotic

Combe Hot Hatch competitors warned over driving standards

HOT HATCH

The Castle Combe Racing Club has warned its Hot Hatch competitors that driving standards need to improve following a number of incidents at the previous round.

The Hot Hatch series was introduced in 2017 and has grown to become one of the Wiltshire circuit's most popular categories, with entries for the most recent round earlier this month hitting almost 30 cars.

Eight of those machines retired from the opening race, though — albeit not all from collisions — and on-the-road winner Joe Dorrington was excluded for passing under the safety car.

Following the event CCRC chairman Ken Davies issued a statement: "The Hot Hatch series has become synonymous with affordable and close racing, appropriately characterised by good driving standards and warm paddock camaraderie. This valued sporting ethos fell short [at the previous round] with several on-track incidents resulting in drivers being penalised and cars damaged, all contrary to CCRC and Motorsport UK's sporting code. In addition, there were reports of unacceptable and adversarial behaviour in the paddock.

"While the vast majority of competitors continue to uphold exemplary driving and social behavioural standards, we now consider it appropriate to convene a driver's briefing before qualifying at the next round to remind everyone of these key on and off-track elements."

STEFAN MACKLEY

New cockpit protection for latest Radicals

RADICAL

Radical has become the latest constructor to introduce a halo-style cockpit protection device for some of its cars.

Customers ordering new models of the SR3 XX and SR10 can have the cockpit safety structure as an optional extra. The device has been developed in a way to minimise aerodynamic drag and is made from T45, a high-strength stainless steel alloy.

"We have taken inspiration from the technology in motorsport, which we've seen work so effectively, and appropriated it to SR3 XX and SR10," said group sales and marketing director Dan Redpath. "Putting the safety of our customers first has always been our priority, and we are delighted to offer this option without compromising our core DNA of delivering an exhilarating motorsport experience."

Radical is currently evaluating whether the structure can be retrofitted to older models. It is not the first prototype constructor to offer such a device, with Revolution revealing in 2020 its own double version of the halo that is now widely used on single-seaters.

IN THE HEADLINES

PRITCHARD'S PREPARATION

British Rally Championship contenders Jason Pritchard and Phil Clarke used victory on Sunday's Sweet Lamb Rally Time Trial in Wales as a warm-up to resuming their BRC campaign on the Nicky Grist Stages next weekend. It was Pritchard's first time driving the VW Polo R5 on gravel and his first gravel rally since crashing out of the Roger Albert Clark Rally last November in his Ford Escort Mk2.

BOSTON BACK IN MAZDA

Multiple discipline champion and former Ginetta GT4 Supercup racer Rob Boston made a welcome return to the Mazda MX-5 Supercup grid at Brands Hatch last weekend. Boston, a champion in both Mk1 and Mk3-spec cars, took the place of George Grant, who was unable to race due to family commitments. In his first Mazda MX-5 event since 2017, Boston claimed a best result of third in Saturday's first race.

BYSOUTH'S MX-5 PENALTY

Colin Bysouth may have claimed a double victory at Brands Hatch last weekend during the Mazda MX-5 Supercup triple-header, but his collision with Leigh Britten in race three as the pair climbed Hailwood Hill earned Bysouth a 10-place grid penalty that will be carried over to the next round of the series at Oulton Park in late July.

SHORT FIESTA JUNIOR EVENT

Fiesta Junior had a disrupted meeting at Oulton Park last weekend, only managing two racing laps that officially counted. The opening race was red-flagged when Luke Hilton crashed, with Thomas Jack Lee (below) declared the winner, and then the second race had to be scrapped amid the timetable limitations following the serious accident in the Track Attack finale. The cancelled contest is due to be rescheduled for an event later this year.

JAMES ROBERTS

RAM raid in GT3 for Loggie and Mercedes

SNETTERTON
BRITISH GT
25-26 JUNE

Loggie leads Haigh at the start of the opening encounter

RAM Racing was the dominant force across British GT's Snetterton round as each of its Mercedes-AMG GT3s took a victory across the two one-hour contests. A win in the opening race before damage limitation in the sequel meant championship leader Ian Loggie extended his advantage at the top of the table to 32.5 points.

The Mercedes proved to be the machine of choice around the three-mile 300 layout. The German manufacturer occupied the front row for both races, which resulted in the cars being handed a Balance of Performance tweak ahead of the races — an extra 15kg and a small reduction in power.

Despite this, Loggie was never headed in his opening stint from pole in race one, gradually pulling away from the returning Flick Haigh, who was sharing a 2Seas Motorsport Mercedes once again with Jonny Adam although not eligible for championship points.

Keen/Igoe lost ground to Loggie in the standings

Behind the leading pair, Mark Sansom's Bentley Continental had moved into third from sixth off the start with an audacious move up the inside at Riches but, on lap eight, he spun away any chance of a podium at Williams, co-driver Will Tregurtha eventually bringing the Assetto Motorsport machine home 13th.

By the time the GT3 pit window opened after 22 minutes, Loggie's lead stood at 3.2 seconds, not enough to negate the 5s success penalty the car had to serve for its third-place finish at Donington Park. It meant Adam rejoined ahead of Callum Macleod but, from the second lap of his stint, telemetry showed that the 2Seas Mercedes' left-rear was slowly losing air and with just seven minutes left it failed completely.

Now in the lead, Macleod came under late pressure from the Lamborghini Huracan Evo of Phil Keen, the WPI Motorsport machine having risen from sixth during the pitstop sequence, and just 0.5s separated the two cars at the flag. The Mercedes of Richard and Sam Neary completed the podium after also benefiting through the pitstop phase, heading home a train of four cars. That included the James Cottingham/Lewis Williamson Mercedes and McLaren 720S of Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton, which had to serve success penalties of 7s and 10s respectively, while Adam Balon/Sandy Mitchell (Barwell Lamborghini) completed the top six.

"The 2Seas car was quick, but it just goes to show you can be quick and it doesn't come to you," said Loggie. "Every round we're just doing a solid job and not throwing it off."

With a 10s success penalty to serve in the

RECORD BREAKERS ON THE TOP STEP

Josh Miller and Jamie Day set a new record with their maiden victory in the opening GT4 race at Snetterton, becoming the youngest winners of a British GT event on combined age.

The 16-year-olds guided their R Racing-run Aston Martin Vantage to top spot after avoiding trouble, and were in prime position to benefit when on-the-road winners Jamie Orton and Seb Hopkins were handed a penalty for a collision.

Aboard the Team Parker Racing Porsche 718 Cayman, Orton had been the prime mover in the opening stint, climbing from seventh to third by the end of lap four. But his progress was halted by the Toyota GR Supra of Tom Edgar, who was acting as a cork in the bottle to the chasing pack. This allowed polesitter Matt Cowley to pull out a substantial gap knowing that the Academy Motorsport Ford Mustang would need to serve a 10s success penalty after its victory at Donington Park.

Despite contact into the Wilson hairpin at one point, Orton remained behind Edgar until the Toyota made its mandatory pitstop and, when the Porsche was relayed to Hopkins a lap later, it rejoined well clear.

Cowley's efforts were rewarded when, after handing over to Marco Signoretti, the Mustang exited the pits just ahead of Hopkins, while Day had moved into third and in sight of the leading duo. The trio closed together and, with less than nine minutes remaining, the Porsche made contact with the left rear of the Mustang into Brundle. Signoretti was tipped into a spin with broken suspension, while Hopkins was handed a 10s stop/go penalty, applied post-race, which dropped the car to eighth and handed the win to Miller/Day.

Promoted to second was the Steller Motorsport Audi R8 LMS of Richard Williams and Sennan Fielding, the pre-weekend championship leaders forced to start from the pits due to an electrical issue. Fielding passed title rival Darren Turner up

day's second race, Loggie had to focus on his championship ambitions and RAM's chances of outright victory fell to the team's other machine. In his second weekend of British GT, Ulysse de Pauw put the Mercedes he shared with John Ferguson on pole, with Williamson also on the front row. From the outset, the duo began to edge away from Macleod, who took to the inside kerb at Riches in avoidance from third at the start. When Williamson brought the 2Seas Mercedes in with a right-rear puncture on lap four, de Pauw was left to circulate alone.

Macleod soon began to struggle with tyre wear, and Mitchell and Euan Hankey (McLaren 720S) pressured him. The decisive move of the race came on lap seven when Mitchell went around the outside of Macleod at Wilson before taking the inside line into Turn 3. The gap to de Pauw now stood at

Winners: Loggie (left) and Macleod celebrate

6.3s but, by the time both Pros came in to relay to their Am co-drivers just past the halfway point, the gap was less than 3s.

Balon chased Ferguson over the remaining laps, and was within striking distance for the final 10 minutes, but the Irishman held firm to take his and de Pauw's maiden British GT win. "The last four or five laps were difficult as we were coming up to lap GT4 cars," said Ferguson. "It was just a matter of staying out of trouble."

Meanwhile, Loggie had taken over from Macleod and rejoined sixth, falling behind Mia Flewitt (in for Hankey), Haigh and Lewis Proctor, who had taken over the Greystone McLaren from father Stewart.

Keen's co-driver Michael Igoe began to pressure Loggie but fell out of contention when he served a 10s stop/go penalty for an unsafe release in the pits, but the driver on the move was Enduro Motorsport's Tillbrook. After passing Loggie on the inside of Agostini, he attempted the same on Proctor a lap later, with Proctor spinning on the exit and nearly collecting Loggie. Flewitt, who had already been passed by Haigh, was next, but the pair collided at Williams, which spun the 7TSIX McLaren.

In the melee, Alex Malykhin, sharing the Redline Racing Lamborghini with James Dorlin, moved into fourth past Loggie and Tillbrook (who avoided a post-race penalty), who finished sixth and fifth respectively.

STEFAN MACKLEY

RACE RESULTS

GT3

Race 1 (33 laps) 1 Ian Loggie/Callum Macleod (Mercedes-AMG); 2 Michael Igoe/Phil Keen (Lamborghini Huracan Evo) +0.549s; 3 Richard Neary/Sam Neary (Mercedes); 4 James Cottingham/Lewis Williamson (Mercedes); 5 Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton (McLaren 720S); 6 Adam Balon/Sandy Mitchell (Lamborghini). **Fastest lap** Ulysse de Pauw (Mercedes) 1m47.469s (99.45mph). **Pole** Loggie. **Starters** 17.
Race 2 (32 laps) 1 de Pauw/John Ferguson; 2 Mitchell/Balon +0.340s; 3 Jonny Adam/Flick Haigh (Mercedes); 4 James Dorlin/Alex Malykhin (Lamborghini); 5 Clutton/Tillbrook; 6 Macleod/Loggie. **FL** Mitchell 1m47.641s (99.29mph). **P** de Pauw. **S** 17.
Points 1 Loggie 100.5; 2 Igoe/Keen 68; 3 Malykhin/Dorlin 67; 4 Balon/Mitchell 65.5; 5 Tillbrook/Clutton 63.5; 6 Macleod 57.5.

GT4

Race 1 (30 laps) 1 Josh Miller/Jamie Day (Aston Martin Vantage); 2 Richard Williams/Sennan Fielding (Audi R8 LMS) +6.696s; 3 Matt Topham/Darren Turner (Aston Martin); 4 Tom Edgar/Jordan Collard (Toyota GR Supra); 5 Chris Salkeld/Tom Rawlings (BMW M4); 6 Aaron Morgan/Bobby Trundley (McLaren 570S). **FL** Jamie Orton (Porsche 718 Cayman) 1m57.901s (90.65mph). **P** Matt Cowley (Ford Mustang). **S** 13.
Race 2 (30 laps) 1 Will Burns/Jack Brown (BMW); 2 Marco Signoretti/Cowley +2.472s; 3 Turner/Topham; 4 Collard/Edgar; 5 Moh Ritson/Ashley Marshall (McLaren); 6 Ross Wylie/Matthew Graham (Porsche). **FL** Ritson 1m58.292s (90.35mph). **P** Day. **S** 13.
Points 1 Topham/Turner 104.5; 2 Williams/Fielding 96.5; 3 Brown/Burns 92; 4 Cowley/Signoretti 87.5; 5 Miller/Day 78; 6 Wylie 76.

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

the inside into Riches with minor contact being made for a net fourth prior to the incident ahead. Turner, along with Matt Topham, completed the rostrum in the Newbridge Motorsport Aston Martin.

Fielding led the sequel comfortably, but the Audi dropped to fourth through the pitstop phase and the Pro-Am pairing of Turner/Topham took the lead with a shorter stop. The Century Motorsport BMW M4, which had run second earlier with Will Burns, closed with Jack Brown at the wheel and took the lead around the outside of Agostini with seven minutes remaining, while Cowley demoted Topham to third before the flag.

STEFAN MACKLEY

Miller and Day took victory with Aston Martin

Granfors (right) pushed Browning hard across all three GB3 races

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JEP motorsport IMAGES

Browning battles for GB3 top spot with Granfors

SNETTERTON
MSVR
25-26 JUNE

Luke Browning moved himself back to the top of the GB3 Championship standings by getting the better of chief title rival Joel Granfors across three races at Snetterton.

The Hitech GP driver arrived at the Norfolk circuit one point behind Granfors, and had not stood on the top step of the podium since the opening Oulton Park round in April. That changed in the weekend's second race on Sunday, but he was made to work hard for it by Fortec Motorsport ace Granfors throughout a tense 12-lap encounter. From pole, Browning held the lead into Riches, while Granfors looked to the outside before slotting into second and Carlin's Javier Sagrera made a stunning start to move from sixth into third.

Heading onto the second lap, Granfors forced Browning to defend to the inside at both Riches and the Wilson hairpin, but was unable to find an opening. The Swede tried again in the same spots on laps five and eight, with the final attempt resulting in the slightest of contacts down the Senna Straight, which damaged the right endplate of Granfors's front wing.

Unaffected by the contact, Granfors continued to apply pressure and it almost paid dividends when Browning slid wide through Brundle on the penultimate lap and had to go defensive out of Nelson, but he held on to win by just 0.235 seconds. "Races like that make a big difference come the end of the season," said Browning. Granfors added: "It was very close, I think we had a bit more pace. I was just trying to keep him stressed and he did a couple of mistakes."

Sagrera claimed third for his first podium of the year having defended race-long from the JHR Developments car of Matthew Rees, while Tom Lebbon and Alex Connor completed the top six. Callum Voisin had occupied fifth, but he ran wide at Riches on lap six, sending him spinning into the barriers on the inside.

Carlin-run Ginetta Junior graduate Voisin had enjoyed better fortune in Saturday's opener when he recorded his second win in GB3. From pole he got the jump on fellow front-row starter Granfors, who dropped behind Browning. While unable to stretch away by more than a few tenths, Voisin was never threatened by Browning, with Granfors offering more of a challenge for position. Carlin's Roberto Faria finished fourth, with Lebbon holding off Elite Motorsport team-mate John Bennett for fifth.

In the reversed-grid race, Mikkel Grundtvig won from the front after keeping Marcos Flack and James Hedley at bay in the closing stages. Browning progressed from 20th to 14th, with Granfors finishing right on his rival's tail once more, meaning he is 11 points behind Browning at the halfway stage of the season.

Lay (black car) took a hat-trick of wins in Radical Challenge

Following two open rounds that produced six different winners, the Radical Challenge underwent a change of pace at Snetterton as James Lay led every lap in all three races to take a clean sweep of victories.

Lay headed Noah Degnbol and Anthony Ayres comfortably in both of Saturday's sprint contests. The reigning Radical SR1 Cup champion then pulled out enough of an advantage in Sunday's 45-minute pitstop race to overcome a success penalty and emerge ahead of John Macleod, with Ayres taking another third. "We have good pace at the moment," said Lay. "The car

WEEKEND WINNERS

GB3
Race 1 (12 laps) 1 Callum Voisin; 2 Luke Browning +0.526s; 3 Joel Granfors; 4 Roberto Faria; 5 Tom Lebbon; 6 John Bennett. **Fastest lap** Faria 1m42.363s (104.41mph). **Pole** Voisin. **Starters** 21.
Race 2 (12 laps) 1 Browning; 2 Granfors +0.235s; 3 Javier Sagrera; 4 Matthew Rees; 5 Lebbon; 6 Alex Connor. **FL** Sagrera 1m41.885s (104.90mph). **P** Browning. **S** 22.
Race 3 (10 laps) 1 Mikkel Grundtvig; 2 Marcos Flack +0.253s; 3 James Hedley; 4 Tommy Smith; 5 McKenzy Cresswell; 6 Zak Taylor. **FL** Faria 1m43.301s (103.46mph). **P** Grundtvig. **S** 22.
Points 1 Browning 239; 2 Granfors 228; 3 Faria 187; 4 Max Esterson 181; 5 Voisin 172; 6 Lebbon 165.

RADICAL CHALLENGE
Races 1, 2 & 3 James Lay (SR3)

RADICAL SR1 CUP
Races 1 & 2 Daryl De Leon

GB4
Race 1 Nikolas Taylor
Race 2 Jarrod Waberski
Race 3 Jack Sherwood

SNETTERTON SALOONS
Nigel Innes (BMW M3, below)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

was quick from start to finish. We've had a couple of DNFs, so we're a bit behind in the championship, but hopefully we can carry on this good form."

Chris Short suffered a blow to his own title hopes after a difficult weekend. A flat-spotted tyre in qualifying left him down the order in races one and two, and he retired at Riches early on in Sunday's encounter.

Daryl De Leon secured a double triumph in the SR1 Cup, ahead of Frazer McFadden both times, to take the championship lead from Ben Caisley. The former table-topper pipped Dougie Bolger to the final podium spot in both races despite struggling with car balance. "I think the first couple of rounds we were strong, but a bit of bad luck didn't help us," said De Leon. "A lot of prep went into it from me and the team and it's definitely paid off."

STEFAN MACKLEY & STEVE WHITFIELD

MARZORATI TO THE FRONT IN GB4

Marzorati heads Gilkes and Sherwood

Hillspeed's Max Marzorati emerged from the latest GB4 round at Snetterton as the surprise championship leader, after Alex Walker's unexpected withdrawal prior to the event left him as the main title challenger to Nikolas Taylor.

Fortec Motorsports driver Taylor secured a double pole and converted the first of those into his fifth triumph of the season in race one, but he was pushed hard by the improved Kevin Mills Racing duo of Tom Mills and Jarrod Waberski. Mills ran second throughout but was handed a 10s penalty at the chequered flag for an out-of-position start and was demoted to sixth, promoting his team-mate to runner-up spot and Elite Motorsport's Jack Sherwood to a third podium in as many races.

Waberski went one better in race two, taking his second win of the season after sweeping around the outside of Taylor at the start. "It's been an improvement from where we've been at previous rounds," said Waberski on KMR's step forward in performance. "We've both had new engines for this weekend and we've alternated back to a different set-up, which works way better."

Mills took second away from Taylor at Riches on lap two, despite the pair making contact on the exit. Taylor initially faded, but a renewed challenge in the race's second half resulted in him reclaiming the position at Brundle on the penultimate lap. Mills tried to fight back on the final tour, but further contact approaching Wilson put Taylor out with a puncture and dropped Mills to fifth with a broken front wing. As the cars behind tried to pass the ailing Mills, Marzorati moved ahead of Sherwood and held on to second by 0.086s at the flag.

An electrical issue prevented Jessica Edgar starting from pole for the reversed-grid race. Sherwood moved past Graham Brunton Racing duo Chloe Grant and Logan Hannah for the lead before the first corner, and controlled the remainder of the encounter.

"Since pre-season, me and the team have adapted quite well to the car but on my side there's been areas where I could have performed better," said Sherwood of his improved form.

Marzorati came home second again, while Mills made amends for his race one and two dramas to finish the weekend third ahead of Waberski, with Taylor fifth. Marzorati admitted he was surprised to end the day as the points leader. "Last night we were thinking about damage limitation," he revealed. "If we'd got three fourths that would have been really good considering my pace, and we've come away with a fourth, two seconds and the championship lead!"

Hannah and Megan Gilkes clashed early on and dropped out of contention, while Grant completed her strongest weekend to date with sixth, a repeat of her result in race two. "It's a huge step up," said Grant. "We did actually find an issue with the car at the start of this weekend which we've had all year."

STEVE WHITFIELD

Taylor won opening race but retired in race two

TOCA SUPPORTS CROFT 25-26 JUNE

Unfamiliar pattern to Croft F4 event

BRITISH F4

Neate grabbed pole and won opener as Dunne battled engine trouble

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JEP motorsport IMAGES

The familiar pattern to 2022 British Formula 4 weekends was turned on its head at Croft. Instead of series dominator Alex Dunne driving into the distance in the opener, it was birthday boy Aiden Neate who led throughout and Dunne's taste of glory came in the partially reversed-grid second contest.

Dunne only qualified ninth for the opener having suffered with a down-on-power engine. And Neate therefore maximised the opportunity offered by his first series pole to take a win, keeping Ugo Ugochukwu at arm's length. "I'm really happy — that pole was a long time coming!" said Argenti driver Neate. "I got my first podium here last year and it was a great birthday present [to win]!"

The processional race was enlivened on the final lap by two unrelated near-misses. Louis Sharp attempted to dive up the inside of Carlin team-mate Oliver Gray at the hairpin but the Kiwi's move just failed, while a procession of oystercatcher chicks was also narrowly avoided after venturing onto the track.

Having finished seventh, Hitech was permitted to change Dunne's engine for race two, just doing so in time. And Dunne made the most of his renewed power to take a comfortable win — although he was aided by polesitter Georgi Dimitrov stalling, giving Dunne a clear run into Clervaux.

Behind, it was chaos, with various drivers in strife — including a clumsy hairpin move from Ugochukwu that broke his front wing. Oliver Stewart was impressively keeping Joseph Loake at bay in second until slowing with three laps to go, promoting Gray and Neate to third and fourth.

Neate hoped his earlier win was "a turning point in the championship" but his second pole came to nothing in the finale when he jumped the start, meaning Gray was the net leader when red flags flew after a heavy crash at Tower for Joel Pearson.

Stewart grabbed the lead on the restart and Gray then slipped to third when a failed attempt at Clervaux led to him taking to the gravel. But Gray was not to be beaten, making a bold move around the outside of Sharp at Tower and then passing Stewart through the Jim Clark Esses to reclaim the lead. "It was an all or nothing move," he confessed.

Behind, Dunne had impressively risen to third from 10th, limiting the erosion of his points advantage from 68 to 51 heading into the summer break.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Haughton grabs GT5 lead with another brace

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

Harley Haughton has had a tremendous time in the Ginetta GT5 Challenge's recent guest appearances on the BTCC support package. To his double win at Thruxton, the talented Stockport teenager added another brace of victories with Elite Motorsport considerably further north at Croft.

Grady (l) was unable to prevent Haughton from taking double win

Haughton never really came under much threat. He topped qualifying by almost half a second over Will Orton, and absolutely walked away with things in Saturday's opener to win by over 7s. It was quite close behind, albeit unusually processional by Ginetta standards, before a change happened for second place at half-distance when the unfortunate Orton headed to the pits for a new right-rear tyre.

That promoted Mikey Doble to second ahead of Sam Smith, while pre-weekend leader Will Jenkins kept the entertainment up. He qualified poorly, but grabbed fourth from Connor Grady on the final lap.

Sunday's race was a little bit closer for Haughton, who survived a bump with Grady away from the grid to lead into Clervaux. Orton pulled off a lovely move on Doble to grab third at the Jim Clark Esses on the first lap, then latched on to Grady as the duo shadowed Haughton early on. But Haughton was able to pull out a gap to take the win by 1.694s, and the championship lead.

There was a lot of fun in the battle behind, with Nat Hodgkiss briefly making it up to fourth on lap two before getting caught in incidents. It settled down with Doble leading Jenkins for fourth.

MARCUS SIMMONS

Smith and Macintyre win thrillers

GINETTA JUNIOR

Ginetta Junior title rivals Harri Reynolds, Josh Rowledge and Will Macintyre were clearly all desperate to win the Croft opener. Lap after lap, the lead changed as the trio battled ferociously at the front.

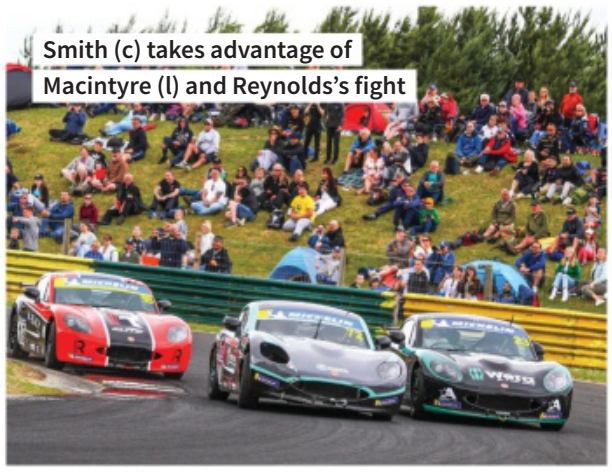
Assetto driver Reynolds had the initial advantage after a move at Tower on the first lap, before R Racing's Rowledge briefly retook the place on lap five. Next it was Macintyre's (Elite Motorsport) turn to have a stint out front as they remained glued together.

Inevitably, something had to give and on the final lap Rowledge was spun out through the complex, while Reynolds and Macintyre were delayed, meaning it was Sonny Smith who triumphed, having homed in on the squabbling leaders in the closing stages.

Race two was a little calmer, with Macintyre grabbing the lead from Reynolds around the outside of Clervaux on the opening lap. He stayed in front to the flag, but never broke more than a couple of car lengths clear. Rowledge passed Reynolds through the Esses at mid-distance to finish as Macintyre's closest challenger.

Macintyre was aided by a slight tow from team-mate Joe Warhurst — who had another weekend to forget — in front, which Macintyre described as a "gift".

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Smith (c) takes advantage of Macintyre (l) and Reynolds's fight

Armstrong on top in Caymans

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Matthew Armstrong was a double Porsche Sprint Challenge GB winner at Croft, and therefore grabbed the points lead, but there was more than just an element of good fortune about his opening victory.

Armstrong had slipped to third in the early stages after Team Parker stablemate Harry Foster made a bold move down the inside of the hairpin. Buoyed by the success of that pass, Foster tried it again on race leader Steve Roberts on lap 10 of 15 — but it was not quite so successful this time.

Instead, Foster clipped the rear of Roberts's Redline machine and damaged his own car, while Roberts dropped behind Armstrong. He did attempt to reclaim the lead late on but there was to be no stopping Armstrong — who was further boosted by a tricky first lap for title rival Charles Clark limiting him to only sixth.

Those final tours provided a glimpse of what was to come in race two. Roberts remained glued to Armstrong's bootlid throughout the contest but was never quite able to make a move and had to settle for second again. Foster, meanwhile, recovered to fifth from the back, finishing one place behind series debutant Sam Smelt.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Roberts couldn't find a way past Armstrong

PORSCHE

RACE RESULTS

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Race 1 (16 laps) 1 Aiden Neate; 2 Ugo Ugochukwu +0.488s; 3 Oliver Gray; 4 Louis Sharp; 5 Daniel Guinchard; 6 Eduardo Coseteng. **Fastest lap** Ugochukwu 1m17.758s (97.23mph). **Pole** Neate. **Starters** 16.
Race 2 (16 laps) 1 Alex Dunne; 2 Joseph Loake +4.257s; 3 Gray; 4 Neate; 5 Noah Lisle; 6 Sharp. **FL** Dunne 1m17.465s (97.60mph). **P** Georgi Dimitrov. **S** 16.
Race 3 (7 laps) 1 Gray (above); 2 Sharp +1.926s; 3 Dunne; 4 Oliver Stewart; 5 Dimitrov; 6 Coseteng. **FL** Gray 1m17.853s (97.11mph). **P** Neate. **S** 16.
Points 1 Dunne 240; 2 Gray 189; 3 Ugochukwu 150; 4 Neate 137; 5 Sharp 130; 6 Guinchard 96.

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

Race 1 (14 laps) 1 Harley Haughton; 2 Mikey Doble +7.334s; 3 Sam Smith; 4 Will Jenkins; 5 Connor Grady; 6 Nat Hodgkiss. **FL** Haughton 1m30.834s (83.23mph). **P** Haughton. **S** 21.
Race 2 (10 laps) 1 Haughton; 2 Grady +1.694s; 3 Will Orton; 4 Doble; 5 Jenkins; 6 Ruben Hage. **FL** Haughton 1m31.246s (82.85mph). **P** Haughton. **S** 21.
Points 1 Haughton 296; 2 Jenkins 284; 3 Grady 262; 4 Doble 250; 5 Orton 232; 6 Hodgkiss 202.

GINETTA JUNIOR

Race 1 (12 laps) 1 Sonny Smith; 2 William Macintyre +0.919s; 3 Harri Reynolds; 4 Luke Watts; 5 Liam McNeilly; 6 Aqil Alibhai. **FL** Smith 1m39.574s (75.93mph). **P** Smith. **S** 23.
Race 2 (9 laps) 1 Macintyre; 2 Rowledge +0.343s; 3 Reynolds; 4 Kanato Le; 5 Smith; 6 McNeilly. **FL** Smith 1m39.303s (76.13mph). **P** Reynolds. **S** 23.
Points 1 Reynolds 267; 2 Macintyre 262; 3 Josh Rowledge 253; 4 Alibhai 177; 5 Smith 155; 6 Joe Warhurst 155.

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Race 1 (15 laps) 1 Matthew Armstrong; 2 Steve Roberts +0.368s; 3 Toby Trice; 4 Sam Smelt; 5 Matt Greenwood; 6 Charles Clark. **FL** Roberts 1m22.975s (91.11mph). **P** Roberts. **S** 11.
Race 2 (11 laps) 1 Armstrong; 2 Roberts +0.326s; 3 Trice; 4 Smelt; 5 Harry Foster; 6 Clark. **FL** Foster 1m23.316s (90.74mph). **P** Armstrong. **S** 11.
Points 1 Armstrong 59; 2 Clark 51; 3 Roberts 47; 4 Foster 43; 5 Trice 29; 6 Greenwood 28.

MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

Race 1 (11 laps) 1 Nelson King; 2 Tom Ovenden +0.015s; 3 Joe Wiggin; 4 Matt Hammond; 5 Nicky Taylor; 6 Charlie Mann. **FL** King 1m40.308s (75.37mph). **P** King. **S** 31.
Race 2 (9 laps) 1 King; 2 Ovenden +3.109s; 3 Taylor; 4 Wiggin; 5 Jack Byrne; 6 Mann. **FL** King 1m40.349s (75.34mph). **P** Hammond. **S** 30.
Points 1 King 381; 2 Taylor 280; 3 Hammond 252; 4 Ovenden 244; 5 Alex Solley 236; 6 Mann 236.

TOCA SUPPORTS CROFT 25-26 JUNE

King has to battle for his latest Mini victories

MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

Ovenden came within 0.015s of defeating King in opening race

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Nelson King has ruled the Mini Challenge Trophy waves so far this season and, although he took his 2022 tally to an incredible seven wins from eight races at Croft last weekend, he had to work hard for his latest successes.

On the surface, it appears that the Graves Motorsport driver led the opener from start to finish, but that only tells part of the story. His team-mate Nicky Taylor was right on King's tail in the early stages and came close to grabbing the lead at Tower before a safety-car period was needed after Alfie Glenie went off at the Esses.

It was during this caution period when King suffered an ABS failure and knew that holding on for the win would be tricky, admitting he would have been happy with a top-five result.

But he did a little better than that, helped by Taylor's latest Tower attempt proving unsuccessful and instead allowing Tom Ovenden to sneak ahead through the Esses. While Taylor dropped back to an eventual fifth, behind Joe Wiggin and Matt Hammond, Ovenden had King in his sights. He got a brilliant run out of the final corner, just missing out from taking the spoils by 0.015 seconds on the drag to the line. "It was a tough race — I've never had to work as hard for a win," admitted King, who said managing the lack of ABS when under so much pressure from behind made this one of his best victories.

King followed that with one of his best opening laps when he surged from fourth into the lead in race two. He had noted where the British Touring Car racers had laid down rubber braking into Tower and used that to perfection to get a great drive out of the corner and emerge from running three-abreast with Ovenden and Wiggin to take second.

He then went storming down the inside of Hammond at the hairpin to grab a lead he never looked like relinquishing. "It was fifty-fifty but I wanted to win!" said King of the decisive pass. "I made the move and Matt gave me room."

Former Junior Rallycross ace Ovenden completed a strong weekend with another second place for the Excelr8 driver, while Taylor was third this time around as Hammond fell back after being deprived of second at the hairpin.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

HOW KING IS RULING THE COOPER CLASS THIS YEAR

Given how Nelson King has dominated the Mini Challenge Trophy so far this season, it's incredible to think that the Graves Motorsport driver had not won a car race prior to his victory in this year's Pembrey opener. Since that breakthrough triumph, he has hardly stopped winning and now sits over 100 points clear at the top of the table, having only been defeated once.

Seven wins from eight in 2022 for King in Minis

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

King moved into cars from karts for 2021 and came within millimetres of taking that maiden success in the Silverstone finale last year, missing out by just 0.01 seconds in a photo finish (ironically to Ovenden, who King narrowly beat in the Croft opener last weekend). That was the high point of a season in which he grew into becoming a regular podium contender, especially after joining Graves mid-year, and he finished 10th in the final standings.

He has since spent a lot more time preparing for the 2022 campaign, especially as he did not have a pre-season testing programme last season, and that groundwork has paid off. King says his engine performance is improved this year, while his own driving has also taken a step forward.

One of his coaches is Graves's JCW driver Max Coates and he has really noticed a difference. "It's very impressive – he's a great little driver," he said. "His speed was never really in question, I think what he's improved on is being more consistent and also learning the racecraft. He was maybe a little bit gung-ho at times last year and that can lead to making mistakes. Now he's maturing as a driver and understanding when to go for a move and when not to."

There was plenty of evidence of that at Croft as King impressively battled his ABS woes to cling on in race one and then timed his moves to perfection to grab the race-two lead. And that rate of improvement is worrying for his rivals, of which there are plenty. The Cooper class of the Mini Challenge consistently attracts 30-car entries and, with partially reversed-grid races to contend with too, it makes King's success even more impressive.

"The first win was a surprise," King admitted of that opening Pembrey victory. "But now it's an expectation to try and win." After such a strong start to the season, King's confidence is sky-high as he seeks to secure the crown.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

McCullough had Davidson for company at start of race two

GARY CRAIG

McCullough continues fine form with another Kirkistown double

KIRKISTOWN
500MRCI
25 JUNE

David McCullough continued his winning streak at Kirkistown last weekend, back-to-back victories cementing his position at the top of the Northern Ireland Formula Ford Championship as the season moved into its second half.

But, despite McCullough's double, it was far from boring. In the first race, McCullough's Van Diemen RF01 cruised away from the rest as expected, but Mondiale pair Alan Davidson and Brandon McCaughan provided plenty of excitement as they fought tooth and nail over second. It was a battle only resolved at the Hairpin on the final lap when McCaughan, who had spent the previous 13 tours trying to find a way past his rival, managed it with do or die inside move with only a couple of hundred yards to go to the flag. FF1600 returnee Drew Stewart had a grandstand view of the action in fourth.

Race two promised more of the same, but the canny Davidson managed to latch on to poleman McCullough's tail off the line and dragged himself out of McCaughan's reach, where he remained for the rest of the race despite the younger man's efforts to close the gap. Again, fourth spot went to Stewart.

There were also plenty of teeth and nails involved in the two main Fiesta races. As has been the pattern all year, main players were the Graham family — dad Derek and son Michael — and the Stewart brothers, Paul and Mark, with some intervention from Neville Anderson. This quintet played vigorously, if not harmoniously, throughout two frantic performances. The first eventually fell to Derek Graham, the second to Paul Stewart, but everybody had at least a chance to lead at some point and, impressively, both contests were played out without significant physical contact.

The third race, for the non-championship 'Fiestaval', had a smaller field and featured a mixed-up grid. Poleman Michael Mulholland bravely stayed ahead of the massed ranks of everybody else until lap three, at which point he was quite politely ushered to the rear of the train by a brace of Stewarts, Paul ahead, and the rest. Corey Alleyne took a sporty third spot at the end.

The Larkham family dominated both Roadsports encounters, with nephew Steven leading uncle Jim across the line in their Radicals, and the similar car of John Stewart third. Both Saloon encounters were dominated by the SEAT of Peter Baxter, who came close to lapping everybody else on each occasion.

The Mazda MX-5 brigade had their own races this time, rather than sharing the grid with the Saloons, and they really stepped up to the plate. David Cousins won the opener at a canter, while second spot was hotly disputed by Damian Moran, Gavin Kilkey and Francis Allen, who crossed the line just 0.3 seconds apart. Kilkey got the drop on the rest in race two, and romped away to a 9s win, while Cousins found himself in a battle with Moran and Allen, which eventually got him into the runner-up spot, but only by 0.1s on the run to the flag.

Finally, two poorly supported Ginetta Junior Ireland races yielded a win apiece for the two starters: Matthew McCord and Ethan Campbell.

RICHARD YOUNG

Graham topped hard-fought first Fiesta Zetec contest

GARY CRAIG

WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA FORD 1600
Races 1 & 2 David McCullough (Van Diemen RF01)

FIESTA ZETEC
Race 1 Derek Graham
Race 2 Paul Stewart
Fiestaval Paul Stewart

ROADSPORTS
Races 1 & 2 Steven Larkham (Radical PR06)

SALOON LIBRE
Races 1 & 2 Peter Baxter (SEAT Leon, below)

MAZDA MODI-5
Race 1 David Cousins
Race 2 Gavin Kilkey

GINETTA JUNIOR IRELAND
Race 1 Matthew McCord
Race 2 Ethan Campbell

GARY CRAIG

For full results visit: speedhive.mylaps.com

Fenwick fends off rivals to score masterful MX-5 hat-trick

BRANDS HATCH
BRSCC
25-26 JUNE

Fraser Fenwick strengthened his position at the top of the Mazda MX-5 Championship standings by recording a memorable treble victory at Brands Hatch last weekend, increasing his win tally in the series this year to eight.

Fenwick was closely shadowed throughout by Steve Foden and Adam Sparrow in race one, but stayed cool under pressure and took a lights-to-flag win from pole. He produced a virtually identical performance to win the second contest, but Sparrow was able to snatch the runner-up spot after getting ahead of Foden at Paddock Hill Bend on lap seven of 21. A subsequent trip through the Paddock gravel dropped Foden even further down the order, but a fine recovery drive helped him salvage fourth behind Mike Comber by the finish.

Foden made the best start from the outside of row two to lead the early stages of race three, but Fenwick fought his way to the front by Paddock on lap four and was never headed thereafter. Sparrow sealed another third behind Foden.

Colin Bysouth dropped back to fourth on lap three after starting from pole, but bounced back to win the opening MX-5 Supercup race for Mk3 entrants. Aidan Hills was second after coming out on top in an exciting battle with guest driver and former category champion Rob Boston.

The second contest was interrupted by a stoppage when repairs to the inside barriers at Paddock were required following a shunt for Alex Jones. Bysouth proved unbeatable again when the race resumed and he led home John Langridge and Patrick Fletcher.

Two off-track excursions and a tangle with Leigh Britten on the climb up Hailwood Hill scuppered any hopes Bysouth had of matching Fenwick and completing a hat-trick in the third contest. A breathless encounter was finally won by Hills after he got ahead of Will Blackwell-Chambers at Druids on lap nine of 19, while Fletcher held off Boston to seal another third.

Latest successes take Fenwick's win tally to eight for 2022

Matt Fletcher endured an eventful time in the MX-5 Clubman double-header as he looked to extend his series lead. He came third on the road in race one, but a jumped-start penalty relegated him to fifth. In race two, Fletcher had to fight his way back up to fifth again after being forced onto the grass exiting Druids on the first lap and falling back several positions. His dramas helped Chris Dawkins take an impressive double win, while Declan McDonnell claimed a pair of useful second-place finishes.

Sidwell leads Bradley in battle for CMMC honours

GARY HAWKINS

Wilson stars during incident-packed meeting

OULTON PARK
BRSCC
25 JUNE

Although some of the races at the British Racing & Sports Car Club meeting held at Oulton Park last weekend were a little light on overtaking, the event as a whole certainly wasn't short of incident.

Three encounters finished under red flags, with the hard-working marshals also having to contend with multiple offs and an oil slick down the entire length of the start/finish straight, caused by the spectacular failure of Dave Cockell's engine when leading the second Modified Fords race and looking to add to his win in the opener.

The variety that can be found in club racing was on full display, with the Fords contrasting sharply with the 500 Owners Association's growling minimalist single-seaters. It was the 500cc Formula 3s that provided the meeting's most convincing win, with Alex Wilson (Cooper Mk10) converting an 11-second advantage over everyone else in qualifying into a Lewis Evans Trophy win by almost 30s after 15 minutes of racing.

The Fiesta Championship provided some of the closest battles of the day, with the multi-coloured hatchbacks that formed the healthy 23-car grid slipstreaming each other throughout. It was reigning Fiesta Junior champion Jenson Brickley who triumphed each time.

But the most dramatic moment of the day came in the Deutsche Marques and Tricolore Trophy Track Attack contest. Thirty cars took the start with Robert Buckland on pole and Matthew Hollier alongside on an all-Renault Clio front row. Buckland initially maintained the lead, but David Shead's BMW Compact and Tony Hunter's SEAT Leon were on his tail. It was not long before Shead was in front, as the lead six cars managed to break away from the pack and soon began

Fiesta Junior champion Brickley bagged a senior brace at Oulton

JAMES ROBERTS

GARY HAWKINS

Adrian Bradley was the winner of the opening Classic and Modern Motorsport contest aboard his BMW E46 M3 ahead of Nick Sutton's Mitsubishi E10. Alex Sidwell used the brute force of his V8 Holden Commodore VF to defeat Bradley in the second event, while Mark Cripps (BMW E46 M3) narrowly beat Peter Seldon's E36 example in the battle for third.

GCI Racing (Craig Butterworth/Ian Wood) finished second for the fourth time in succession in the Fun Cup Endurance race, but the result could have been better had leader Butterworth not been spun around by tailender Sam Smeeth in the Greensall Motorsport entry at Clearways in the closing laps.

Stobart Sport, with Colin Kingsnorth and Richard Webb at the wheel, picked up the pieces to snatch the win, having featured in the top three for much of the four-hour race. Reigning champions UVio/Hofmann's Lotus suffered frustration when lost drive caused their car to stop out on track at Graham Hill Bend, costing the team any chance of claiming a third victory of the season.

MARK LIBBETER

Lewis Evans Trophy 500cc F3 spoils went to Wilson by nearly 30s

JAMES ROBERTS

to catch the backmarkers. Geoff Prince's Volkswagen Golf was running fourth when he came to lap the Peugeot 206 GTI of Kevin Matkin and they made contact, triggering a huge accident.

Although the initial impact was on The Avenue, their speed in this section was such that the wrecked cars, tumbling end over end, finished at Dentons. Thankfully, Matkin was out straight away but Prince had to be cut from what was left of his car and taken to the medical centre. Shead was declared the winner, with Hollier and Rich Hockley (Honda Civic) triumphing in the earlier battles.

The final race for the Clubsport Trophy showed no signs of the drivers having been affected by what had gone before, with cars clashing twice on the same section of track in the first few laps, this time thankfully without any need to stop the race, which was won comfortably by Liam Crilly's BMW Z4.

This stark reminder of the gratitude and respect owed to those who enable racing to take place safely made the minute's silence observed earlier in the day for Chris O'Brien, a 30-year veteran of the crash unit who had died suddenly the previous week, even more pertinent.

STEPHEN MOSLEY

WEEKEND WINNERS

GARY HAWKINS

BRANDS HATCH

MAZDA MX-5 CHAMPIONSHIP
Races 1, 2 & 3 Fraser Fenwick

MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP
Races 1 & 2 Colin Bysouth
Race 3 Aidan Hills

MAZDA MX-5 CLUBMAN
Races 1 & 2 Chris Dawkins

CLASSIC AND MODERN MOTORSPORT CLUB
Race 1 Adrian Bradley (BMW E46 M3)
Race 2 Alex Sidwell (Holden Commodore VF)

FUN CUP ENDURANCE
Stobart Sport
(Colin Kingsnorth/Richard Webb)

SUPERSPORT ENDURANCE
Geoff Newman/Darren Burke
(Caterham 310R, above)

OULTON PARK

MODIFIED FORDS
Race 1 Dave Cockell (Escort Cosworth)
Race 2 Piers Grange (Escort Mk2)

FIESTA CHAMPIONSHIP
Races 1 & 2 Jenson Brickley (ST240)

500cc F3 LEWIS EVANS TROPHY
Alex Wilson (Cooper Mk10)

TRACK ATTACK
Race 1 Matthew Hollier (Renault Clio, below)
Race 2 Rich Hockley (Honda Civic)
Race 3 David Shead (BMW Compact)

CLUBSPORT TROPHY
Liam Crilly (BMW Z4 Coupe)

FIESTA JUNIORS
Thomas Jack Lee

JAMES ROBERTS

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Caterham crew finished 11th from 200 starters in 2002 Nurburgring 24 Hours

Caterham's finest hours

Twenty years ago, a humble Caterham squad took on the Nurburgring 24 Hours and delivered a giant-killing performance that captured the imagination of fans

STEVE HINDLE

The frustration with some modern endurance racing is that it can be annoyingly predictable; which is why a race in 2002 was so remarkable, when the might of German automotive engineering was brought to its knees by a band of unlikely lads and a diminutive hand-built sportscar, whose lines were penned some 45 years previously.

Anyone who has ever raced a lap of the Nordschleife will tell you there is no tougher test, prompting racer Chris Cooper to sit down with Caterham Cars MD Simon Nearn in the summer of 2001 and pitch an idea of a joint effort to combat some of the biggest names in production car racing for 24 hours around 'the Green Hell'.

It wasn't Caterham's first attempt at endurance glory. In 1992, its American dealer invited a factory team (led by chief engineer Jez Coates) to join an assault on the 'Longest Day of Nelson'. The Seven ran for 990 laps, winning outright and beating factory entries from Honda, Mazda and others. Lessons learned would be well remembered.

It also wasn't the first time that a team from Kent had headed to the Eifel. Cooper knew of the woes of some previous hobby entries; this had to be different. He wanted full attention from the factory, aware that, in return, Nearn required a comprehensive development programme, together with the support of a major media partner.

Nobody knew the Seven better than Coates. During his tenure, he had diligently transformed a simple kit car into a world beater. He instinctively identified the elements required to define the approach, proposing the focus should be on building a blueprinted car already in Caterham's portfolio: the R400 Superlight. Formula Ford specialist Minister Power would oversee the engine programme, believing an unstressed 1800cc unit could deliver all that was required to repeatedly cover the lap in just over 10 minutes. Graham Fuller from Minister was therefore an early recruit to Coates's inner team and immediately set about determining the operating parameters to keep the car in the fight.

A similar approach was taken with tyre, brake and gearbox partners. Coates had worked with each for well over a decade and all knew what the Seven needed for both reliability and performance.

Meanwhile, Cooper was assembling the team to race and support the effort. Top of his list was Team Parker Racing, a then youthful outfit, that also guided him to 2001's R400 crown. Parker would build the car, alongside Caterham's Chris Weston. As Stuart Parker recalls: "The synergy was inbuilt from the start. Everyone had years of invested experience, so when somebody spoke, everybody listened, and when Chris came from the factory to help build the car, we just focused on what we each did best. The whole project was fuelled by positivity."

Autocar was promptly recruited as media partner. Steve Sutcliffe and Chris Harris (now of *Top Gear* fame) would represent the magazine, Cooper would lead, and the fourth man would be Clive Richards. Richards isn't only quick but mechanically sympathetic, too. Then, out of the blue, Sutcliffe received a second invitation to race, this time from Ford. It was an offer the stand-in British Touring Car driver couldn't refuse, and so Cooper turned to Peter Haynes, a former *Autocar* man who was also an accomplished Caterham racer. Haynes knew the 'Ring well, making it an easy choice, and one Sutcliffe would live to regret, his entry managing just 54 laps (compared to Caterham's 130).

Once finished, the car underwent aero development and night-lights testing at Bruntingthorpe, the latter being key to dark hours confidence yet equally detrimental to airflow along the power-sapping straights. Finally, a trip to Oulton Park gave the car a competitive shakedown and the team the chance to practice pitstops and driver changes. A glitch with the propshaft was quickly identified but, once remedied,

The Caterham R400 attracted plenty of attention from fans

NATHAN DOWN

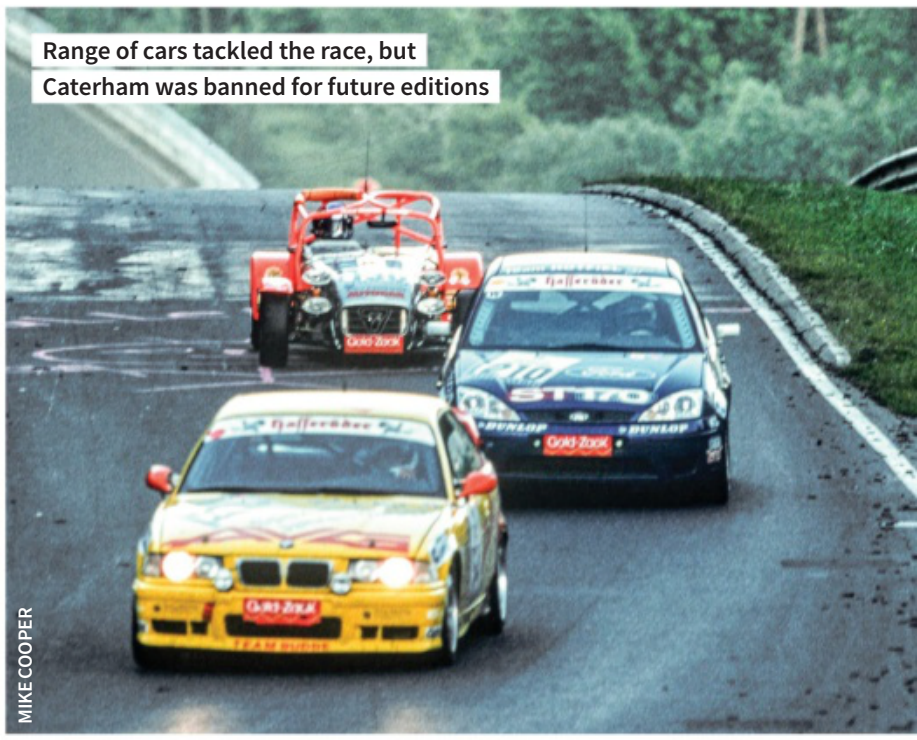
Joke was on Sutcliffe for opting for troubled Ford team instead

MIKE COOPER

The class-winning team (l-r): Harris, Richards, Cooper and Haynes

MIKE COOPER

GRAHAM FULLER


Range of cars tackled the race, but Caterham was banned for future editions

MIKE COOPER

"Twenty years on, wins and championships later, nothing will ever eclipse it"

the car ran faultlessly and was deemed 'Ring-ready.

By the afternoon of the race, over 200,000 fans had assembled, ready for the most remarkable of all *Einfuhrungsrunde* (green-flag laps). With spectators descended onto the track, Cooper describes it as "a most surreal moment". "Normally, the fans get close to the cars, sometimes pounding the roof in approval but, for me, in an open Caterham, they patted my helmet and even tried to shake my hand," he remembers. "It was 20 minutes of mayhem that made me realise this race wasn't just about us.

"Once racing got under way, fan participation gathered pace too. Exiting the Karussell, I found myself with only one hand to steer; if I didn't wave with the other, fireworks were hastily launched towards me. It was exhausting yet exhilarating and, as the stint progressed, everyone started to see this funny little English car bravely overtaking in places where others didn't dare."

Haynes adds: "We weren't the only Seven on the grid, but people were responding to us. It could have been the bright orange rollcage but, as we climbed the order, you sensed the excitement in the crowd, who would cheer every time they saw we were still in the running."

It was nine hours into the race before Harris's first turn at the wheel. He later waxed passionately, describing "the glow of a thousand raging bonfires that shielded the night-time sky" as he watched his dash flicker between 129 and 130mph along the back straight, "only to be brutalised by the leading Viper, hammering past some 70mph faster". But, as any Caterham racer will tell you, what is lost with power can mostly be recovered in the twisty bits.

Next was Richards. "It was by far my most memorable weekend of racing," he says. "Twenty years on, wins and championships later, nothing will ever eclipse it. I remember the lingering smell of barbecues and the brilliance of the sun rising over the Eifel; I had to share the moment."

Coates recalls the same story: "We'd made steady progress through the night, and then Clive gets on the radio talking nonsense about the sunrise. 'Keep your eyes on the bloody road!', I told him."

Cooper took the final stint. The team had raced up the order of 200 starters into 11th at the finish, heading its class by a whopping 10 laps. It was a result nobody had dared to dream of and was signalled by an eruption of cheers from the family and friends who had travelled in support, not to mention thousands of others, across the pitlane, through the grandstands and on the banking.

Cooper says the whole experience resonates even now. His Challenge Consulting business had not only found the budget to race but assembled a team dedicated to a single goal. Haynes, the PR man, described it as the truest moment for the Seven. Harris wrote that he would bore his grandchildren relentlessly, while Richards' words still echo the praise of his team-mates and crew.

It was both remarkable and unique, made even more so by Germany's ADAC banning the Seven from ever returning to its grid on "safety" grounds; a reaction more likely inspired to appease those who had just been taught a lesson in lightness. But the final word should go to Coates. "It was Caterham's finest hour," he says. It is hard to disagree.

FINISHING STRAIGHT

Staying on track despite distractions

VIDEO GAME
EA SPORTS F1 22
RRP £49.99
(available on PC, PlayStation and Xbox)

F1 2022 is the 13th successive official Formula 1 video game created by Codemasters' Birmingham outpost since the first release back in 2010. This writer can remember each vividly and this year's edition, available this week, represents one of the biggest step changes so far.

Firstly, it's not actually called F1 2022, but *EA SPORTS F1 22*. With the development studio bought by Redwood City-based publishing giant Electronic Arts last year for $1.2billion, this is the season where the change of ownership has clearly taken hold.

The EA influence predominately takes the form of 'F1 Life'. In essence, it's a swanky living area where you can alter the look of the wallpaper and furniture, before creating your own avatar with branded clothing, more of which can be bought with in-game currency, either earned or bought with real-world money. Oh joy.

Sadly, it comes across like your parents suddenly buying some Yeezys and visiting a Harry Styles concert. It tries too hard to appeal to a TikTok generation.

Here, you can also place a road-going supercar on display. Yet the vehicles aren't just for decorative effect — you can take them on track across a series of 40 challenges replicating F1 Pirelli Hot Laps during grand prix weekends.

The cars, including Aston Martins, Mercedes-AMGs, Ferraris and McLarens, are stunningly detailed, and mercifully there is enjoyment to be found by taking them for a spin. But ultimately, the inability to race these against computer-controlled rivals or online competitors renders this a largely throwaway addition.

Away from the attention-grabbing flimflam, the long-term appeal of *F1 22* rests with the portrayal of the baseline sport, which now includes the latest car specifications, the new Miami International Autodrome and revised handling characteristics.

The tracks have received fresh banners, kerbs and asphalt colouring, while the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, Yas Marina Circuit and Albert Park Circuit are resplendent with their new layouts.

But the rest of the venues continue to lag behind contemporary simulation platforms, with inaccurate corner angles and bumps.

While the trackside visuals, post-race animations and slick presentation — 1997 F1 champion Jacques Villeneuve and Formula E title winner Jean-Eric Vergne are now part of the voice roster, as are presenters Natalie Pinkham and Alex Jacques — bely the game's ageing internals, the track detail is a sign that the underpinning technology is getting on a bit.

In the hunt for redeeming qualities, we started a single race using the sprint format at Imola with Daniel Ricciardo. Clinging to the steering wheel with ever-tensing aggression, you're in the zone, working with your race engineer (now voiced by former McLaren F1 mechanic Marc Priestley), checking off the laps, monitoring strategy and pulling off last-second overtaking moves.

Battling the computer-controlled rivals feels more natural than ever, with jostling for position in the early laps, strategically using their Energy Recovery System to attack and defend, plus sometimes clattering into each other.

The handling this year is more tail-happy, so managing oversteer upon corner exit by

Handling is more tail-happy

Some elements of track detail betray game's ageing internals

ALL PICS: EA SPORTS F1 22

short-shifting is essential at times. Once you have acclimatised, the new approach makes for a more rewarding driving experience, especially since the new-generation cars climb over kerbing with more flexibility. Having a physics system that works well with both a gamepad and a steering wheel peripheral is no mean feat.

The 'My Team' managerial career makes a welcome return, taking your fictional character and squad through a development curve towards championship glory. Despite only surface-level tweaks compared to predecessors, it remains the best single-player campaign across all racing games.

While the attempt to add a level of glitz and glamour to the game will further alienate a vocal crowd of simulation-focused purists, this gaming franchise still delivers one of the most complete and compelling packages in sim racing. F1 22 continues that fine tradition, even if at times its priorities are in the wrong place.

TOM HARRISON-LORD

For daily racing game news, visit traxion.gg

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

British Grand Prix
F1 World Championship
Round 10/22
Silverstone, Great Britain
3 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1455, Channel 4, Sun 1430
TV **Highlights**
Sky Sports F1, Sun 2000, Channel 4, Mon 0005

FIA Formula 2
Round 7/14
Silverstone, Great Britain
2-3 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 1655, Sun 1000

FIA Formula 3
Round 4/9
Silverstone, Great Britain
2-3 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 0950, Sun 0830

W Series
Round 3/8
Silverstone, Great Britain
2 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 1310

Porsche Supercup
Round 3/8
Silverstone, Great Britain
3 July
TV **Live** Eurosport 2, Sun 1150, Sky Sports F1, Sun 1205

Formula E
Round 7/10
Marrakech, Morocco
2 July
TV **Live** Channel 4, Sat 1630, Eurosport 2, Sat 1630

IndyCar Series
Round 9/16
Mid-Ohio, USA
3 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1830

Indy Lights
Round 6/11
Mid-Ohio, USA
3 July

European Le Mans Series
Round 3/6
Monza, Italy
3 July
Livestream on motorsport.tv, Sat 1235, Sun 1010

DTM
Round 4/8
Norisring, Germany
2-3 July
TV **Live**
BT Sport EPSN, Sat 1215, BT Sport 2, Sun 1215

DTM Trophy
Round 3/7
Norisring, Germany
2-3 July
Livestream on motorsport.tv, Sat 1405, Sun 1405,
TV **Live** BT Sport ESPN, Sat 1400, BT Sport 2, Sun 1400

TCR Europe
Round 4/7
Norisring, Germany
2-3 July
Livestream on motorsport.tv, Sat 1415, Sun 1315

World Touring Car Cup
Round 5/10
Vila Real, Portugal
3 July
TV **Live** Eurosport 2, Sun 1300, Sun 1700

GT World Challenge Europe Sprint Cup
Round 4/5
Misano, Italy
2-3 July

IMSA SportsCar
Round 8/12
Mosport, Canada
3 July

NASCAR Cup Series
Round 18/36
Road America, USA
3 July
TV **Live** Premier Sports 1, Sun 1930

TEE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

UK MOTORSPORT

Donington Park MGCC
2 July
BCV8s, Cockshoot Cup, MG Cup/Metro Cup, MG Trophy, Midget & Sprite Challenge, Morgan Challenge, Triple M Challenge

Snetterton MSVR
2-3 July
Bernie's Outlaws, EnduroKa, Trackday Championship, Trackday Trophy, Turismo X/ Elise Trophy

Brands Hatch 750MC
2-3 July
5Club Mazdas, Armed Forces Challenge, Bikesports, BMW Car Club, F1000, Formula Vee, Hot Hatch, Toyota MR2s, Roadsports, Sport Specials

Donington Park ECR/ MSVR
3 July
Equipe Sprint

Lydden Hill LHMC
3 July
HRDC (Allstars, Classic Alfa Challenge, Jack Sears Trophy)

Harewood
3 July
British Hillclimb Championship

Santa Pod
2-3 July
British Drag Racing Championship

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Rudolf Caracciola briefs Manfred von Brauchitsch after vacating the cockpit of his Mercedes-Benz W154 and handing over driving duties during the 1938 Italian Grand Prix at Monza. Heat from an exhaust leak had been causing Caracciola so much pain that it was decided von Brauchitsch, whose Mercedes had been sidelined earlier with engine trouble, should have a crack at it, although his own discomfort resulted in them swapping back. The car, which had also survived a lap-two off by Caracciola, managed to finish in third place, albeit three laps adrift of the victorious Auto Union Type D of home hero Tazio Nuvolari.

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KARUN CHANDHOK

MY FAVOURITE... CAR

ORECA 03R

MAIN: GILBERT; INSET: JEP

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

He made it to Formula 1 but it's probably fair to say that Karun Chandhok didn't exactly have the best equipment in the form of the HRT F110 and Lotus T128. It's therefore not a surprise that he looks elsewhere for his favourite racing machine, and it comes from his time in sportscars.

Chandhok drove in selected events for LMP2 squad Murphy Prototypes between 2013 and 2016, and picks the Nissan-powered ORECA 03R as the car he most enjoyed.

"I just seemed to get on with it straight away from the first lap I drove it," says the Sky F1 pundit. "I've always liked a car that had a stable rear on corner entry. That car didn't have any real surprises, always a little touch of understeer. The aero balance, particularly on corner entry, gave a lot of confidence.

"I was always the shortest driver – I couldn't ever reach the heel rest, for example, but even so it was a car I could just get in and get on with it, at any circuit, but particularly at Le Mans."

Chandhok contested the 24 Hours three times with Murphy. After early delays, Chandhok was sixth in LMP2 in 2013, sharing with Brendon Hartley and Mark Patterson, but it's the following effort he remembers best.

"I'm still really annoyed," says the 38-year-old, who this time shared with Nathanael Berthon and Rodolfo Gonzalez. "I feel like 2014 was the year we should have got a good result. We were going OK through quali but then I touched a bit of oil at Indianapolis and shunted. But it didn't matter because it felt like we had a competitive car, then I got caught in a rainstorm in the race with seven other people – aquaplaned under the safety car.

"I was on the Mulsanne Straight, second gear, doing probably 40mph, and the water got underneath the floor. I had no steering, no brakes and sailed into the barrier and that cost us. We had the potential to have won LMP2 that year."

KEVIN TURNER

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Best of the British GP

ALL THE ACTION FROM SILVERSTONE

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Autosport, ISSN number 0269946X, is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG, United Kingdom. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256. Subscription records are maintained at Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG.
Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

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Tel: +44 (0) 20 7429 4000.
Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd, 28 Planetary Road, Willenhall, Wolverhampton WV13 3XT.
ISSN 0269-946X. Autosport is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG.

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